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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-018 *26 January 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

League Chief, Syrian Envoy Discuss Euphrates Water Usage

NC2501194696 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid met today with Dr. 'Isa Darwish, Syria's permanent representative to the Arab league.

After the meeting, Darwish said he had briefed Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid on recent Turkish statements on the water of the Euphrates River and on Turkey's accusations that the Syrian Government is sponsoring terrorism. The Syrian official described these Turkish claims as unfounded and a kind of blackmail to pressure Syria in its peace negotiations [with Israel].

The Syrian official said there is Syrian-Iraqi coordination regarding the Euphrates water. He explained that a Syrian-Iraqi meeting will be held in the first half of February in Damascus to discuss this subject.

Palestinian Affairs

Jordan's al-Kabariti Meets 'Arafat, Inaugurates Representation Office

JN2501205496 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti met with President Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority, in Gaza this evening and conveyed His Majesty King Husayn's congratulations on the results of the Palestinian presidential and legislative elections. The foreign minister also held talks with the Palestinian side on consolidating relations between the two fraternal people. They also reviewed peace efforts and coordinated stands in this regard.

Mr. al-Kabariti officially inaugurated the Jordanian representation office in Gaza, which was established three months ago.

[Begin recording] [al-Kabariti, in English] It is very obvious that we are here carrying a good-will message from his majesty the king, to convey our congratulations to the elected president of Palestine state, Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, or President Yasir 'Arafat.

We are very happy, we are very honored to have the president come with us to celebrate the opening of our mission here to the Palestinian state in Gaza, and we hope that our discussions that will be conducted after iftar [breaking the Ramadan fast] will concentrate on widening and enhancing the bilateral relations between our two countries and between our two peoples.

['Arafat] The fact that this visit comes at this time in particular, and that we are together inaugurating this representation office for our Jordanian twin on the territory of the Palestinian twin, is an expression of the genuine relations binding the twin brothers Jordan and Palestine. God willing, we will continue to pursue the same path to achieve the goals of our Arab nation. I would like to thank his majesty the king for this kind gesture, and thank my brother the foreign minister, on behalf of their [Palestinian] brothers who have feelings of deep affection and appreciation for them. [end recording]

'Arafat, Jordan's al-Kabariti Cited on Gaza Talks

JN2501212296 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video; from the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti visited Gaza today on the first high-level trip to the area since it came under Palestinian rule in May 1994. After arriving in Gaza city, al-Kabariti and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat inaugurated Jordan's representation office in the city. The ceremony was attended by heads of other Arab representation offices in Gaza.

The foreign minister is joined on the visit by senior ministry officials and four members of Parliament, including the chairman of the House's Foreign Affairs Committee 'Abdallah al-Nusur.

Al-Kabariti carried a message from the king to 'Arafat, congratulating him on his recent election as president of the Palestine National Council [as heard].

The foreign minister and 'Arafat held talks that focused on bilateral issues and Middle East peace developments. 'Arafat, who is expected to visit Jordan in the next few days, said he hoped the kingdom would continue its support to the Palestinians. In an interview with Suzanne 'Afanah, 'Arafat spoke of the importance and significance of the Palestinian elections.

[Begin recording] ['Arafat] We have to stress upon how to coordinate, and how to participate, and how to work together in all fields, by all means, and in all levels. It is very important now. And we are in need of his majesty's support, especially, as you know, we had received our Palestinian territories, which had been completely destroyed—all our infrastructures had been completely destroyed during the occupation. So

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we are in need of his majesty's help, and our brothers in Jordan, and our brothers in all the Arab countries, and our friends so that we can reconstruct what had been damaged during the occupation. In the same time, no doubt, this election is very important, because it is a democratic, free election, and it is a milestone for the Palestinian independent state according to our Palestinian National Council resolution, coordination with Jordan, according to the free choice of the two peoples.

['Afanah] You promised your people an independent Palestinian state. How hopeful are you that this will still become a reality in light of the Israeli prime minister's latest rejection of the idea?

['Arafat] Who said it? Yesterday, he said in our meeting and during the press conference, he had mentioned that this will be discussed in the final status, which will start as soon as possible, and not exceeding the beginning of the third year, which means in the 1st of May, next May, for the final status, where we will discuss the independent Palestinian state, including Jerusalem, all the refugees, the so-called new refugees and the displaced persons—there is a committee, a Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian-Israeli committee, already started discussing this point—and the settlers with their settlements, and the final borders.

['Afanah] So, as far as an independent state, you see it coming within the next couple of years.

['Arafat] No doubt. No doubt. It is coming. [end recording]

Al-Kabariti said he agreed with 'Arafat to establish a standing committee to follow up Jordanian-Palestinian relations and implement bilateral agreements. The committee will hold its first meeting soon.

[Begin recording] ['Afanah] This visit is the first by a Jordanian Government official to Gaza. What is the significance of your trip in bolstering Jordanian-Palestinian ties?

[Al-Kabariti] Well, it was indeed a great pleasure for us to be in Gazat Hashim [Gaza] for the first time, and to convey his majesty's greetings and congratulations to President Yasir 'Arafat, and the newly-elected legislative council. It was also an opportunity for us to hold bilateral discussions to find ways and means to strengthen and enhance the bilateral relations, whether in terms of economic, or political, or human relations, and we hope that next week President 'Arafat will be coming to pay a visit to Jordan; and this will also give us another opportunity to continue our discussions, and try to bring about the best ways and means to achieve what we have been aiming for. [end recording]

'Arafat Receives Cables From Clinton, Mubarak, Saddam

JN2501214896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received a cable of congratulations from U.S. President Bill Clinton on winning the presidential elections. President Clinton commended the manner in which the elections were held and wished the elected Legislative Council members success.

President 'Arafat has also received a similar cable from Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa.

In addition, President 'Arafat received a cable of congratulations from Iraqi President Saddam Husayn on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

PC Member 'Abd-al-Shafi Says No Need To Amend National Charter

NC2501181496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1650 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, 25 Jan (MENA)—Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, who received the most votes in the elections to the Palestinian Council [PC] in Gaza, has explained that the PC's responsibility is to inform the world of current developments. In an exclusive statement to a MENA correspondent today, he said currently things are not progressing toward the achievement of our basic rights, which include self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, in addition to the rights of the refugees. He added that Israel is continuing to create obstacles, usurp our land, and establish settlements.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi said we must not bargain over our just rights. Israel is responsible for any setback to peace; the world must understand this. He said he sees no need to amend the Palestine National Charter. He said any amendment to it must be reciprocated by Israel by recognizing our rights, including the right to self-determination.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi said observing Israel's actions gives us a taste of how the final-status negotiations will go. He asked why Israel is building bypass roads. Is it building them for our good or to consolidate its own aggression? He called on the Arab countries to be strict in their policy toward the United States and to support the Palestinians during the final-status negotiations.

Assessing the Palestinian election process, Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi said that generally speaking the elections were reasonable, although several irregularities occurred. Such

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irregularities were deemed acceptable by the observers. He added that the relationship between the Palestinian Authority and the PC will be democratic, because the democratic path has become known, firm, and necessary. We need to further enhance national unity and democracy.

Asked whether he will agree to be chairman of the PC, Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi said he prefers not to be its chairman, but if he is asked he will not say no.

'Abd-Rabbuh Calls For New Palestinian National Charter

TA2501161696 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 24 Jan 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Bethlehem (the West Bank), QUDS PRESS — Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, minister of culture and information, has said that the current stage calls for drawing up a new national charter that conforms with the development of the Palestinian political program. He added that the current charter "is not binding on the Palestinian people or the other parties." He noted that the new charter "will determine the foundations for reaching a genuine Palestinian-Israeli peace."

Referring to urgent Israeli demands to cancel articles in the National Charter that Israel says call for its destruction, 'Abd- Rabbuh told QUDS PRESS: "We neither seek to destroy anyone nor want to be destroyed by anyone." The Israeli Government has allowed the return of all Palestine National Council [PNC] members to participate in a meeting aimed at changing the charter.

According to the Oslo agreements, the PNC has to convene two months after elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council, whose members will automatically become PNC members.

Observers Demand New Vote in Jerusalem, Hebron

TA2501161596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Palestinian observers of the council elections on Saturday [20 January] have called for a new round of voting in East Jerusalem and Hebron. Speaking at a news conference in Jerusalem, they said the poll should be held again in a democratic atmosphere and without heavy security, and the voting in Hebron should take place only after an Israeli Army withdrawal. Seven independent candidates from Hebron, and another from Jerusalem, have appealed the elections results to a Palestinian court.

Official Says No Repeat Elections in Jerusalem, Hebron

JN2601085396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Muhammad Shutayyah, secretary of the Central Election Committee, has categorically denied any intention by the committee to repeat elections in Jerusalem and Hebron. In a statement to the Voice of Palestine, Shutayyah said that the rumor about repeating the elections in Jerusalem and Hebron is part of a campaign to harm the democratic atmosphere that prevailed in the presidential and legislative elections. Shutayyah said some candidates have made claims, and the Election Committee will look into them.

Fatah Infrastructure Said Rearranged Following Palestinian Elections

TA2501161796 Ramallah AL-BILAD in Arabic 24 Jan 96 p 2 (tentative)

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-BILAD has learned from Fatah sources that the Fatah Central Committee decided, effective today, to dissolve all the movement's district committees in Palestinian provinces. It also decided that the organizational branches in the provinces would again come directly under the authority of the Central Committee through the movement's higher committee.

This decision was made in order to rearrange Fatah's house in conformity with the new conditions and the rearrangement of the Fatah infrastructure inside and outside Palestine.

AL-BILAD sources say that a meeting was held yesterday in Gaza to assess the current situation in light of the results of the Palestinian Legislative Council elections. There is an intention to heal the wounds of the election campaign, which brought about mixed results, including the failure of some of the movement's key figures in a number of constituencies and victory by some of its cadres who were not on the official lists but who proved their overwhelming popular presence. These include Qaddurah Faris, 'Abd-al-Fattah Hamayil, Kamil al-Afghani, Husam Khadr, Salah al-Ta'mari, and Jamil al-Tarifi.

PA Security Chief on Cooperation, Israeli Elections

TA2501123596 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 25 Jan 96 p A2

[Report on interview with Hakam Bal'awi, director general of PA Intelligence and Security Services and

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Fatah Central Committee member, by Yosef Elgazi in Bal'a; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "We are cooperating with Israel on security issues with the aim of protecting the peace process. It is natural, it is necessary, and it corresponds with the agreements we signed. Jointly protecting the peace process is more important to us than all the wars we have fought against each other." This statement was made by Hakam Bal'awi, director general of the Palestinian Authority's [PA] Intelligence and Security Services and Fatah Central Committee member, in an exclusive interview with HA'ARETZ at his home in the village of Bal'a, near Tulkarm. [passage omitted]

[Elgazi] Why do the Palestinian security arms fight each other?

[Bal'awi] Wherever there are several security arms, there are disagreements and struggles between them. This is happening in Israel as well. Nevertheless, ever since we set up the Supreme Security Council, we have been gradually overcoming disagreements and expanding coordination. [end Bal'awi] [passage omitted]

Bal'awi believes that the main task of the newly elected PA Council will be "to lay the foundations for the establishment of an independent, law abiding, democratic, and pluralistic state. The other mission it has, is to reorganize the Palestinian society and take it from the period of revolution to an era of a state."

[Elgazi] There is talk that the council's first resolution will be a declaration of independence for the Palestinian State.

[Bal'awi] This is rash talk that is cut off from reality. All in good time. We will attain our goals gradually, but in a better way. Before we get there, we have other things to tackle, such as legislation and civil rights.

[Elgazi] Will the elected council amend the clauses of the Palestinian Covenant?

[Bal'awi] Amending the clauses is the joint task for the Palestine National Council and the PA Council. We will fulfill to the letter every commitment we have undertaken in signing the agreements with Israel. Many Israelis often bring up the issue of amending the Covenant, forgetting that in reality many things have changed between us and Israel that go beyond the Covenant clauses. The Likud has been bringing this issue up because it is politically inactive.

I believe, however, that if the Likud wins the elections, it will honor the agreements with the PA. It knows now that it will have no other choice. Sooner or later, the Likud will come out with statements that will surprise many people. Otherwise, it will lose its chance of being an important political power.

I trust Israeli public opinion to accept the peace process favorably. The Israeli voter will choose the party he believes sustains the peace process and works for the establishment of a true and comprehensive peace with the Palestinians and the other peoples in the region.

[Elgazi] There has been criticism in Israel that the PA is not operating with enough determination against the Palestinian opposition to the peace process, the Islamic Jihad and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement].

[Bal'awi] The elections we held proved that we have overcome the extremists among us. Many Hamas members took part in the elections, and some of its supporters were elected council members. I am all for a constructive opposition, here and on your side.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Jericho Radio Reports 'Arafat-Peres News Conference

JN2401202396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Jan 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat met with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres near the Bayt Hanun [Erez] checkpoint this evening. President 'Arafat hoped that the independent Palestinian state will be established immediately.

At a joint news conference with Peres after the meeting, the president said the talks have been positive and significant, especially since they come after a successful democratic experience like the Palestinian legislative elections. President 'Arafat stressed that the Palestinian people, in exercising their right to vote, voted for peace.

President 'Arafat explained that the Israeli side promised to jointly follow up on the issue of releasing Palestinian prisoners. He expressed interest in beginning the permanent status negotiations as soon as possible. He indicated that the Palestinian and Israeli sides are bound by a written agreement.

The president hoped that progress would continue on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks to achieve a just, comprehensive peace in the region. President 'Arafat stressed the need for joint cooperation for peace.

Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stressed that his government is committed to completing the redeployment in Hebron. Peres added: We will start the permanent status negotiations in May. He announced that the redeployment in the rest of the West Bank will be completed in August.

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Peres said the Palestinian economic situation should be improved. He said that it was agreed to grant 3,000 permits to Palestinian workers from Hebron to work inside the Green Line. The permits will be issued this week and next week.

Meanwhile, the Israeli side will facilitate the return of Palestine National Council members to the homeland. Describing the Palestinian legislative and presidential elections as democratic and successful, Peres said the elections were a great success for peace.

Peres denied Israel intends to annex the Ma'ale Adumim settlement to Jerusalem. He said that, since the peace agreements, Israel is committed not to annex any part of it.

Ministerial Talks on Jerusalem Reportedly Under Way

TA2601114096 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 26 Jan 96 pp 1, 20

[Report by Bill Hutman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Secret "informal talks" on Jerusalem between Israeli and Palestinian ministers have been conducted here and abroad over the past several months, Ziyad Abu-Zayyad, a senior Palestinian official in Jerusalem, said yesterday.

"The meetings are on the ministerial level, with the aim of exploring each side's position on Jerusalem," Abu-Zayyad said. "We are not talking about social gatherings. These are meetings that are scheduled with each side knowing that Jerusalem is going to be the topic of discussion."

Abu-Zayyad described the talks as "informal," but said the purpose was "to clarify the positions of the two sides." He declined to say which ministers were involved.

'Aliza Goren, spokeswoman for Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, would not confirm or deny Abu-Zayyad's claims. "There are no negotiations under way on Jerusalem," Goren said, but added, "If the claims (by Abu-Zayyad) are correct, that there are meetings of one kind or another, they are not being conducted with the knowledge or approval of the prime minister."

There have been several reports in recent weeks of meetings concerning Jerusalem being held by Israeli and Palestinian academics, that are being conducted with the government's approval and, at times, coordination. Abu-Zayyad said he had participated in these informal meetings, and that he believed both the Palestinian and Israeli participants were acting with the full knowledge of their respective leaders.

Israeli officials have stated publicly there are no talks at the ministerial level, and have also denied involvement in the informal meetings between academics. Palestinian officials have until now declined to comment.

Abu-Zayyad, who was elected Saturday [20 January] to the new Palestinian Council as a Jerusalem representative, said the meetings between Palestinian and Israeli ministers were "fruitful" and "help set the stage for the formal talks."

However, he said he does not believe real progress can be made in negotiations on any final-stage issues, including Jerusalem until after the Israeli elections.

The final-status talks are scheduled to begin in May, under the terms set down in the Oslo accords.

Egypt

Mubarak Speech Stresses Fight Against 'Terror' in Egypt

NC2501134196 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0931 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Speech by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak during the Police Day celebrations at the Police Academy in Cairo — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Egypt's police force has always maintained a safe homeland for the people. Its performance has been an example of commitment to duty and respect for the law. It has never hesitated to make sacrifices to preserve the homeland's stability, uphold the dignity of the law, protect society from the evils of crime, or repel the dangers posed by plotting by foreign forces that do not want stability and progress for Egypt.

Egypt's police have tried hard, winning the world's admiration and respect, because this proved to everybody that Egypt will, God willing, remain a safe and stable country on the solid rock of which are dashed the plots of the homeland's enemies, who have sold themselves to the devil and waged a war against their homeland, threatening its security and stability and seeking to damage its interests in the implementation of evil schemes aimed at weakening Egypt's status and impeding its progress.

Egypt's security service has contained the danger posed by the terrorist and treacherous groups. It dealt them decisive blows that spoiled their plots, exposed their organizations inside and outside the country, and paralyzed their activities. This was done with the close cooperation of the alert masses, who realized the false excuses the sabotage groups tried to hide behind. The masses

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discovered the extent of the vile and scandalous crime that aimed to destabilize the homeland and destroy its structure to serve satanic schemes that have nothing to do with religion, but that strike at its heart and betray God and his teachings. But God is omnipotent. Their plotting was exposed and the people took the initiative with the help of the alert institutions, which placed the homeland's supreme interest above all considerations.

The policemen did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives, sweat, and blood. They waged the vicious battle boldly and courageously to defend the homeland's security and the citizens' safety. This success would not have been achieved without the great sacrifices and heroic actions by honorable men who devoted themselves to the sacred mission of defending the people's right to a safe and stable homeland that is not endangered by hired groups blinded by deception and spoiled by illegally obtained money and that agreed to betray the homeland, thus plummeting to the depths of evil and earning the people's anger and categorical and firm rejection.

The police have lost noble martyrs, officers and soldiers, who sacrificed their noble blood in defense of every Egyptian's right to a safe homeland that protects his honor, possessions, and future. They sacrificed their lives in defense of the Egyptian right to a homeland, the future of which is not threatened by a perverted gang that seeks to ruin its economy and damage its interests, spreading fear among the citizens, and killing the homeland's sons without being deterred by religion or conscience. This success would not have been achieved without the people's support for the police in their courageous battles against these groups, in pursuing them everywhere, and in encircling them in their lairs, which are falling one by one. The people rejected these groups' crimes and demanded firm punishment to deter them. It rejected these groups' false affiliation with Islam and regarded them as groups of sedition and darkness, harming religion and distorting its image. It also refused to regard these groups as part of a religious trend, because faith does not justify betrayal of the homeland and damage to Islam nor does it justify the intimidation of society or the crimes of murder and violation of honor.

Greetings to the heroic policemen who are performing a noble mission that can only be shouldered by honorable men capable of making sacrifices and who are ready to give their lives to defend every Egyptian's right to a safe homeland that protects its present and defends its future.

Greetings to their noble martyrs who died in the most honorable arena of sacrifice in defense of great achievements that became the target of plots by hired groups that have betrayed the homeland, the people, and religion.

Greetings to Egypt's great people, who realized from the start that Egypt was facing groups harboring ill will toward the homeland and that their claim of being Muslims was a lie that deceived no one because Islam is the religion of love and tolerance and rejects tyranny and evil.

History will record that when we confronted this dangerous phenomenon we wanted to abide by the rules of law and justice. We have not violated the defendants' rights to an honest judiciary and a fair trial. Despite the harsh conditions, we preferred to keep our behavior toward the homeland's adversaries civilized, without the tools of revenge, upholding human rights, and placing the whole issue in the hands of a fair judicial system that has no authority above it except the law.

We all realize that the battle is continuing and that the current weakness of the terrorist remnants inside and outside the country should not divert our attention from the duty of monitoring their activities and foiling the desperate attempts by the seditious groups in their last throes. We know the challenge is not limited to deterring the armed terrorist actions, but extends to rectifying this imbalance that has penetrated some minds as a result of misleading and deceitful teachings. It also extends to closing all the loopholes that the evil elements are trying to infiltrate to destroy society.

It is our duty to maintain the greatest awareness and vigilance and to do our best to uproot the phenomenon and nip the causes in the bud, after containing the complications and symptoms. What helps us in attaining this goal is recent progress, both tangible and positive. This progress is demonstrated by all the region's countries becoming aware of this danger, to which everybody, without exception, is being subjected, and realizing the satanic dimensions of this criminal scheme. Accordingly, they have become more capable of moving effectively and with coordinated and decisive steps toward confronting it at its source and nipping it in the bud. This is vital for the region to catch up with the march of progress and live up to the challenges facing the entire world in this historic era, which is the scene of major changes to which nobody can remain blind. And no one should fail to find a new future for himself in this era.

Along with this awareness spreading in the region of which we are a fundamental part, there is broad international awareness of the danger of leniency toward the cancerous phenomenon of terrorism, which, if left untreated, will spare no one. Gone are the illusions some had that they could remain safe while others were

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in danger or that terrorism could make a truce with someone. Everybody, East and West, discovered that they are all in the same boat fighting the plague of the new age and facing burning and destructive flames that threaten every civilization. For this confrontation to be successful and decisive, it must be based on a comprehensive world consensus, concerted and planned activity, and a relentless iron will that does not yield before false appearances or glamorous promises. What these promises reveal is contrary to what the sinful minds behind them conceal.

Dear Brothers, the great role played by the Egyptian police in their service of the people is not confined to protecting state security or preserving the safety of the internal front. It extends to securing various aspects of people's lives and creating an appropriate atmosphere for every citizen to feel secure about himself, his family, and his livelihood and to be shielded from crimes against himself and his property. [passage omitted]

The Egyptian police are performing their duty while standing alongside the valiant Armed Forces. National security in its broader sense extends its shield of protection both at home and abroad at the same time and to the same degree. Interrelations between the two dimensions are clear and unambiguous. Every achievement in consolidating security domestically will help to strengthen our regional national security and firm up the pillars of our dynamic and vital presence on every level.

Brothers and Sisters, we have always been certain that the wave of terrorism will break against the solid rock of this homeland, thanks to the sacrifices of its honest sons and the great people, who realize the dimensions of the conspiracy, grasp its goals, and unanimously declare their rejection of these groups. I have always been confident of the Egyptian people's ability to attain their goals and chart their path amid mighty challenges. [passage omitted]

God willing, there will be no setback on our march. The will of destruction will never prevail and nobody will undermine this comprehensive structure built by the Egyptian people with their sweat, blood, and sacrifice. The march of the homeland will proceed safely to its correct destination, continuing to build, promote peace and progress, and achieve a major renaissance. In this it will be protected by God's care and guarded by a great people and their scientists, thinkers, valiant army, a capable police force, and longstanding and enlightened history that is resilient to ignorant people and hypocrites.

I pray God Almighty to crown our march with success and to light our path, guiding us to our destination. Verily he is the best supporter. May peace and God's mercy be upon you. [applause]

Egyptian Minister Views Struggle Against Muslim Brotherhood

NC2501152196 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0855 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Speech by Egyptian Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi at the Police Day celebrations held in the Police Academy Hall in Cairo — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] We thank God that our holy war against the forces of evil and terrorism has made great strides. Egypt's security services have decided the first round of struggles firmly and in a way that deters such activity. We are preparing and planning for more struggles to confront and eliminate those involved. The issue is not one of religion and shari'ah as they claim, but is as clear as day: A handful of evil people have sold their religion and homeland for the sake of a false leadership and dirty money taken by spilling the blood of victims and innocent people, who are cursing their actions, exposing their sins and real intentions, and demanding that they be punished for their crimes. This is our role from which we will not deviate. It is a punishment for everyone who attacks Egypt's security and people, a fair punishment carried out in line with legitimacy and the law to uphold the sovereignty of the law and expel the law of the jungle with which they govern their lives and manage their affairs. That was how we planned, modernized, trained, and penetrated all the defenses of their terrorist and destructive organizations inside and outside the country, eliminating the leaders, their aides, and those carrying out their actions in the country. [passage omitted]

In its all-out confrontation with these misguided forces, the Egyptian security services had to look at the Muslim Brotherhood's international organization, which was the real base and the cloak from which emerged all those organizations that have betrayed their religion and homelands and that are spreading the poison of hatred and malice throughout Arab and Islamic societies. They falsely claim that they are holding the banner of Islam and propagating its mission, but are alien to these noble and sacred goals. Those who seek God's blessing do not advocate the killing of innocent people or seek leadership and collect funds at the expense of Muslim victims and others who believe in God's divine messages.

An observer and analyst of this organization and its actions realizes that its members use every means of destruction they can. They have deceived youths and

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recruited them to serve their purposes in the name of religion. They have allied themselves with the treacherous terrorist organizations to strike a blow at security and stability. They have tried every possible means to spoil political and parliamentary life. They have waged wars of rumor to harm honorable people and national symbols. All their pens and mouthpieces are trumpets calling for destruction and despair, as if we have scored no achievements. [passage omitted]

The Muslim Brotherhood organization denies all the great achievements of our country. Its history confirms that it has never followed a policy that is devoid of personal ambitions for leadership and authority, even at the expense of the Egyptian citizen, his security, and stability. We will continue to lie in wait for this organization and monitor its maneuvers and vile attempts at infiltration. We will monitor the steps it takes and confront it when the time is right. God willing, we will never let it harm the Egyptian citizen, a believer by instinct. [passage omitted]

Egypt: New Muslim Brotherhood Guide Interviewed

NC2501211896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1750 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Interview with new Muslim Brotherhood General Guide Mustafa Mashhur by correspondent Jihad al-'Idan; place and date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-'Idan] How do you assess the progress of the Muslim Brotherhood [MB] during the life of the late General Guide Muhammad Hamid Abu-al-Nasr, particularly in relationship to the political and intellectual challenges in the Egyptian, Islamic, and international arenas?

[Mashhur] Mr. Abu-al-Nasr, God rest his soul, pursued the same line that Imam Hasan al-Banna, al-Tilmisani, and al-Hudaybi had pursued before him. This line is based on promoting the word of God wisely and through good preaching, and on demanding that the commandments of God and Islam be followed. This approach was initiated by Imam al-Banna. It sought to bring Muslims together and unite their ranks. This is what we tried to do during Abu-al-Nasr's lifetime.

We also dealt with current events that concern the Islamic nation, like Palestine and Afghanistan. We tried to perform our Islamic duty toward these issues.

[Al-'Idan] How do you explain the massive attendance at Abu-al-Nasr's funeral? Was it a sign of support for the Muslim Brothers and the Islamic plan they follow?

[Mashhur] By God's grace and in spite of past ordeals, Egypt's Muslim youth joined the group, lived with it, and tasted the sweetness of faith. This has tied the youth to the group. Young people loved and respected the late guide. They came from different parts of the world to take part in the funeral. It was a source of joy for us. As much as Abu-al-Nasr's departure pained us, the massive participation consoled us and filled us with joy at the responsiveness the young people are showing toward our cause.

[Al-'Idan] People have different views when it comes to the Muslim Brothers. Some officials classify you as extremists. Neutral people see you as dynamic, rational, and open-minded regarding current issues. What do you say to this?

[Mashhur] Some writers try to score points with the government. When they see the government standing against and harassing the Muslim Brothers, they try to distort our image, pin false charges on us, and label us with terms like hawks and doves and so on. There are no hawks or doves among us. We are all brothers in God and soldiers fighting for the sake of God. There are no strict or lenient Muslim Brothers. We all are committed to a good, moderate approach which violates no laws. We stick to our principles and insist on our demands patiently. We do not clash or resort to violence with the government or any other party. We use the normal channels, like trade unions, university staff clubs, student unions and the like to promote the word of God wisely and through good preaching. But they want to distort our image and pin false charges on us.

In the 1940's, the Muslim Brothers fought the Zionists in Palestine and fought the British at the Suez Canal. They think that this was extremism. This is a lawful right dictated by Islam and the homeland itself.

New Political Party Formed in Egypt

MS2501131796 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 25 Jan 96 p 5

[James Whittington: "Egypt's Copts Link With Moslems"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo — A group of young fundamentalists from Egypt's banned Moslem Brotherhood has joined forces with like-minded members of the Coptic community to form a new centrist political party called Al-Wasat.

Attempts in the past to register Islamic or Christian parties have been scuppered by President Hosni Mubarak's insistence that religious parties are not allowed.

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"The big problem in Egypt today is that there are large numbers of people who are not represented. The events and repression of 1995 which culminated in the (parliamentary) elections made it imperative to have such a party as ours," Mr Ab-al-'Ula Madi, the Islamist leader of the new party, said yesterday. The party has yet to receive final approval from the authorities.

"Our party believes in moderation and dialogue. We are young and ready to play a role in political life and we will show how this can work by committed Moslems and Christians working alongside each other," said one of the party's founding Copts, Mr Rafiq Habib, who is the son of the leader of Egypt's Coptic Evangelical Church.

The Moslem Brothers and the Copts were especially aggrieved by November's widely discredited elections which were overwhelmingly won by the ruling National Democratic Party.

The Copts were upset by Mr Mubarak's statement that he could not find anyone from the minority good enough to stand as a candidate for the NDP. The Moslem Brothers meanwhile suffered widespread government repression during the election campaign. In the run-up to the poll hundreds of arrests were made, its headquarters was closed down, and some of its best candidates were jailed on conspiracy charges by a military court.

The militant Islamic group Gamma'a al-Islamiya has targeted Copts in recent years.

Egypt: 117 'Repentant Terrorists' Set Free

NC2501203896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1700 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 25 Jan (MENA)—A new group of repentant terrorists who have discarded extremist thought and returned to the true teachings of the Islamic religion have been released from Tura prison. The group, the eighth to be released since last year, consists of 117 repenters who were set free amid the applause and cheers of their relatives, who were waiting for them. [passage omitted]

The released detainees belong to several groups, including al-Jihad and al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah; they hail from Cairo, al-Jizah, al-Qalyubiyah, and other areas.

Egypt's Musa Comments on Yemeni-Eritrean Dispute Over Island

NC2501134096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1320 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 25 Jan (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that Egypt is following the crisis between Yemen and Eritrea over the al-Hanish al-Kabir Island. He also said that Egypt is undertaking the necessary contacts to find a peaceful solution to this problem.

Musa also stressed that France is continuing its mediation between Eritrea and Yemen.

Libya

Libyan Editor Comments on U.S. President's Speech

LD2501134796 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 1230 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The U.S. President said that America should carry out what he termed as its burdens and shoulder its responsibilities as a world power, claiming that the dangers that America is facing are many — such as terrorism, the proliferation of mass destruction weapons, organized crime, drug trafficking, and the deterioration in the state of the environment.

The international affairs editor of the JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY [JANA] commented on the U.S. President's statement by saying: Thus, America is once more referring to the policy of force, arrogance, and haughtiness, exploiting flimsy pretexts and excuses — the policy that it has continuously pursued and adopted as a method in order to impose its domination over nations. The editor pointed out that what America was claiming regarding peace and combating environmental pollution are mere false slogans concealing the American aims to control nations and plunder their wealth. The editor asked: What American environmental protection is made available if America itself is the source of all germ, chemical, and destructive weapons, which had also caused the pollution of the environment in many areas of the world, bearing in mind that the latest evidence of this was the recent discovery of chemical weapon storage facilities in Belgium and the admission of the U.S. Defense Department that these weapons include more than 3 million chemical bombs, missiles, and artillery shells — the biggest proof that America is more remote than ever from the protection of the world environment; in fact it has actually become the source of all pollution in the world.

The editor then paused at the U.S. President's reference to what he termed as prosperity and security in America, and said: What prosperity and what security are being enjoyed by American society, while all American official statistics record the highest levels of murder and terrorism and the spread of crime, drugs, and armed gangs, to the point where America has become the headquarters of crime and destitution in the world, as the number of unemployed in America is in the millions. Also, the

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disputes now taking place between the U.S. President and the Senate regarding the budget crisis, which led to the closing down of many American establishments and the expulsion and deprivation of about 1 million American officials of their employment; the stopping of some U.S. Embassies in many countries of their world in carrying out some of their activities as a result of the budget deficit and the reduction in the number of their employees, are all the results of the reflection of the failed policy being pursued by America at home and abroad, and deny the allegations of the U.S. President regarding prosperity. [passage omitted]

The JANA international affairs editor concluded by saying that the peoples of the world have actually become aware of the dimensions of the aggressive American plans, as indications of the determination of peoples in many countries of the world to confront this American policy by way of demonstrations and sit-ins have begun to appear. [passage omitted]

Morocco

Moroccan Human Rights Minister Ziane Resigns

LD2501213196 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Royal Courts, Protocol, and Medals announces that Mohamed Ziane, minister delegate to the prime minister in charge of human rights, has presented a request to His Majesty King Hassan II asking him to relieve him of his functions at the head of the Ministry of Human Rights. Mr. Ziane also put himself at his majesty's disposal to carry out any other functions.

His majesty acceded to Mr. Mohamed Ziane's desire and entrusted Mr. Abderrahmane Amalou, the justice minister, with the task of acting at the aforementioned ministry.

Sudan

Sudan: Ummah Party Reports Official 'Arrested'

EA2501205096 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance in Arabic 1715 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement issued in Cairo last Sunday [21 January], the Ummah party confirmed that the Security Forces of the [National Islamic] Front party arrested a parliamentary deputy and official of the party in Kaduqli town at the beginning of January and took him to an unknown destination.

The statement said the Freedoms and Human Rights Committee in the Ummah party had received confirmation that the security authorities arrested 'Abd-al-Rahman Abu-al-Bishr, a leading figure of the party in southern Kordofan, in Kaduqli town. He was taken from his house to an unknown destination.

It said the opposition official is 80 years old and is ill. The Ummah party called on regional and international human rights organizations to contact the Sudanese security authorities and exert all possible pressure to find Abu-al-Bishr and release him immediately.

Western Sahara

Polisario Front on Call For Extension to UN Mandate in Sahara

LD2501135396 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] With regard to Western Sahara, the UN secretary general proposed to the UN Security Council the extension of the mandate of Minurso [UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara] by four months in order to allow the identification process of Saharan voters to resume. This proposal was made, I remind you, after a visit by Butrus-Ghali's special envoy, Chinmaya Gharekhan, to the region. From New York, Bachir Mustafa Sayed, in charge of external relations for the Polisario Front responds to this proposal:

[Begin Sayed recording] If we are to analyze this report, one can say that there are at least four essential aspects. The first aspect is the request for the renewal of the mandate of Minurso. It is a good thing. It is a new opportunity, but it remains to be seen if this opportunity will only bring about the maintenance of an increasingly unacceptable status quo, and which would only mean the waste of time and money, or will it in real terms bring about progress in the implementation of the plan and thus the commitment to talk in order to resolve the political problems which remain to be solved. [end recording]

With regard to the identification process itself, Bachir Mustafa Sayed reaffirmed the Polisario Front's willingness to take part in it.

[Begin Sayed recording] The Polisario Front has reiterated its agreement as much with the settlement plan as with the UN secretary general's compromise: thus the willingness of the Polisario Front to assist in the identification of all people belonging to a community which itself belongs to the territory. [end recording]

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Bahrain

Bahraini Officials Announce More Arrests of 'Saboteurs'

NC2601111296 Paris AFP in English 0934 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Manama, Jan 26 (AFP) — Bahraini officials announced Friday [26 January] that several more people had been arrested in connection with the political violence that has swept the country in recent weeks.

A government spokesman did not indicate how many were arrested, but said the "saboteurs" would be tried for "threatening the country's" security."

He said those arrested were responsible for fires in a apartment at al-Ma'amir, south of the capital, and gas canisters placed in garbage cans in the western town of al-Diraz and in Madinat 'Isa in the southwest.

Another gas canister was placed in a private car in the western town of Jannusan, the spokesman added. [passage omitted]

Bahraini Opposition Members Comment on Dialogue on Qatar TV

LD2501125296

[FBIS Report] Qatar Television in Arabic at 0905 GMT on 13 January during the "Dialogue on an Issue" program carries a 84-minute recorded studio interview with Shaykh Ali Salman, introduced as a leading figure in the religious movement in Bahrain, and Dr. Mansur al-Jamri, a member of the Arab Organization for Human Rights, by Muhammad al-Musfir.

The host states that the guests live outside the Gulf area, but does not say where. The guests first discuss how the Gulf is seen abroad, particularly in the foreign press. They recall the colonial period and discuss the concept of civil society.

Shaykh Salman is asked if the differences voiced at the recent Gulf Cooperation Council, GCC, summit in Muscat was a healthy phenomenon or a sign of discord within the GCC. He replies: "I believe that the issue of differences in views of individuals or states is a very natural matter and we expect it to exist in any society or any other political grouping. The way to deal with these differences must be decided and defined in a way that safeguards the right of all parties to express their views."

Dr. al-Jamri is asked if he agrees with the statement made by Richard Murphy during his latest trip to the Gulf that voicing differences was a healthy sign and was not harmful. He answers: "I agree that airing differences is not considered as a negative thing, but the running of matters in a way that attempts to impose views and achieve control is the negative point in any differences." He adds that if this negative phenomenon prevailed within the GCC, then that Council would start losing its means of success.

Asked whether he agreed with the description that his movement was one which incited to "terrorism," Shaykh Salman states that during his stay in London and meetings with various newspaper reporters, he never met anybody who expressed the view that was reported by the Bahraini press and the local news agencies. He adds that no one from the free press he met described the religious movement in Bahrain as "terrorist." He then reviews the situations in Egypt, Algeria, and Afghanistan.

Asked whether there was a trend in the West to undermine Islam, Shaykh Salman states: "I believe that the international Zionist movement is one of the most important factors of the attempt to link the Islamic movement with [terrorism] and making the Islamic world the new enemy, instead of the old one, i.e. the communist movement." He adds "I believe that the stance of the governments of the Islamic and Arab worlds toward the Islamic movement is, very regrettably, irrational. A large section of the Islamic movement accepts dialogue and debate and that if there were any extremist views these should be disciplined." He adds: "The issue of dialogue between the religious movement and Arab governments and intellectuals is the only way out for the Islamic world from any future bloodbath."

Dr. Mansur al-Jamri mentions the concept of the clash of civilizations and reviews how Islam is seen in the West and praises the situation in Bahrain where Sunni and Shi'i Islam, and various political tendencies, coexist peacefully.

He then talks about the concept of civil society and states that Islam is compatible with and encourages that type of society and mentions a number of Islamic scholars who advocate such an idea.

He continues: "The opposition in Bahrain does not act according to sectarianism or separatism or in connection with foreign parties, but acts according to the Constitution and recognizes the rule of the ruling family and recognizes the existence of others and that the security of the state must be protected and that the same applies to the right of the citizen. The issue is that if you do not protect the right of the citizen, you cannot ask the citizen not to undermine the security of the state. The state must safeguard the right of the citizen so the citizen

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protects the security of the state. The various tendencies endeavor to achieve a balance in which the state protects the right of the citizen and in which the citizen safeguards the security of the state."

Asked whether the opposition movement was a national movement or a faction, Shaykh Salman answers: "It is a movement for reform and its political aim is to go back to the elected national assembly and the enforcement of the Constitution. The participation of one particular group among the various sections of the people in this movement increases at times and diminishes at others, but on the whole, all the people agree on the need to improve the situation of the country and the need to increase the participation of citizens and the consideration of his views in his various daily matters. This concept is not adopted by a given group, but is the concept of all."

The guests then recall the events that took place in Bahrain in November 1994 and the historical background of the opposition and the attempts to divide the opposition. The guests cite an Amnesty International report on the human rights situation in Bahrain and recall human rights violations.

On the issue of deportation of Bahraini citizens, Shaykh Salman states: "I believe that if a charge is brought against someone, he must have a just trial and a verdict must be issued by an independent judiciary." He adds: "If someone commits a crime against the homeland, some members of the homeland, or a given person, he must come under the law and must have a fair trial and an independent verdict must be issued. He must accept the responsibilities [for his actions] before an independent judiciary. This is what reason dictates. A decision was issued to deport Dr. al-Mas'ari from Britain. He is not British, but there was wide coverage in the British press. The person is not British. Can you imagine if a British person was deported from Britain, all hell will break loose there." The guests discuss the issue of arrests and violations of human rights in Bahrain and cite a number of U.S. and British newspapers as examples. Both guests deny that there were exaggerations in reporting human violations in Bahrain.

With regard to dialogue, Dr. Mansur al-Jamri states: "I call, and I do so continuously, for dialogue between those who make decisions and the citizen because dialogue is the soundest thing. I wrote this in the press and said it repeatedly to the media, either on the BBC, the radio and television, and in my weekly articles in our national press in Qatar."

On the issue of support for the people's demands, Shaykh Salman states: "There are messages from parliaments, more than 51 British members of parliament and other politicians calling for the same demand: giving the people their constitutional rights, allowing those in exile to return. Congressmen and the European Parliament have also expressed the same thing."

After thanking the guests, Muhammad al-Musfir states: "I would like to stress once again that we have addressed messages to all our brothers in the Arab Gulf region to participate with us in this program. What prompts us in this stance is not a reaction, but an open dialogue between the citizen and those who make decisions in our region. I wish that all those with views would write to us to participate with us in person or in any other effective way for the sake of our security and stability and for the sake of contributing to the building of the Gulf and human civilization, instead of having a people who consume goods bought by oil resources from which the West benefits."

Bahraini People's 'Coalescence' With Leadership Against Riots Noted

JN2601103896 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0705 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 26 Jan (WAKH) — A Bahraini newspaper praises the coalescence between the Bahraini people and leadership against the riots and subversion. It says that this magnificent coalescence shows the genuineness of the people and reminds the deluded and dreamers that the Bahrainis are a civilized people and a cause of pride for Bahrain.

In a commentary today, AL-AYYAM says: Since the sabotage erupted, it was clear to all observers, both inside and outside Bahrain, that the Bahraini people did not support the instigators of the riots and their actions or the foreign parties that stand behind them, despite their flowery statements. The paper says the riots were confined to arson and vandalism, which means that these acts were carried out by a pathetic and isolated group that had no support.

The newspaper says that the Bahraini people proved to be civilized and progressive and showed that they are peaceful people who want build their country and help it progress, like any other civilized people. The paper notes that the Bahrainis know that oneupmanship does not build a school, that fires bring nothing but havoc, and that riots only cause destruction.

The newspaper adds: The coalescence between the good people and the wise leadership from the start against the riots and subversive acts was natural, not alien. The Bahraini population, with all its segments and classes, knows that the state is an impregnable fortress against

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the rancorous and saboteurs and that it is a safety valve for the present and the future.

AL-AYYAM says: There is no argument that the Bahraini people's stand, its decisive rejection and condemnation of the riots, and its absolute support for all of the government's measures were among the important factors in earning the State of Bahrain world respect and faith in its credibility.

Concluding its commentary, the paper says: The Bahraini people's great stand and magnificent coalescence with the leadership shows the their genuineness and reminds the deluded and the dreamers that the Bahrainis are civilized and a source of pride for Bahrain.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Amir Views Security Situation, Regional Issues

LD2501194096 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, the amir, has reaffirmed his confidence in and assurance over the future of the State of Kuwait as long as the Kuwaitis are united — one hand and one soul. This came in a statement which his highness, may God preserve him, made to Milhim Karam, chief editor of AL-HAWADITH, which the magazine will publish in its issue tomorrow, Friday, and in which his highness dealt with all the issues that preoccupy the mind of the Kuwaiti citizen, and the relations between the State of Kuwait and the fraternal and friendly states. His highness the amir pointed out in his statement that his feeling of satisfaction and assurance regarding the future of Kuwait is not due to sentiments but stems from facts all of which confirm that there is no danger to Kuwait because there is a God who protects Kuwait, a people who defend it, and brothers and friends who stand with it.

His highness, may God protect him, lauded the heroic Kuwaiti people who knew how to triumph over subjugation and how to cling to their land and insist on their sovereignty. His highness reaffirmed that the Kuwaiti people are a free and honorable people who have grown up enjoying sovereignty which they constantly practice and live under. His Highness the Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah expressed gratitude for all those who helped Kuwait in its tribulation so that it could be restored as the land of sovereignty, democracy, and pride. His highness, may God preserve him, stressed the democratic process in the country, and at the same time praised the capability of the Kuwaitis to shoulder the responsibility of this democracy and the parliamentary life. His highness said that cooperation between the Government and the National Assembly is fruitful and is in the interest of the homeland.

His Highness, may God preserve him, reaffirmed that the security situation in Kuwait in general is stable, and that the security efforts will increase in an attempt to discover and confiscate the weapons which the invaders left behind, and to prevent the rise in the percentage of crimes in Kuwait, which was and will always be a safe country. His highness the amir spoke also about terrorism and reaffirmed that Kuwait is against terrorism and that there is no terrorism in Kuwait in any form or any practice. His highness also referred to the higher committee for completing the implementation of the Islamic shari'ah, and pointed out that the committee is looking into the task which it has been entrusted with, and that it is moving in a good, positive way.

His highness the amir praised the Gulf Cooperation Council and said that it is still a good, sound, and promising experiment, and he pointed out that the final communique of the Muscat Summit confirmed the cohesion of the member countries vis-a-vis the fateful issue. Regarding the possibility of convening an Arab summit, his highness the amir said that this stage is not one for discussing the convening of an Arab summit. His highness explained that the Damascus Declaration was not a substitute for a summit, but he stressed that the agreement and solidarity of the eight member countries of the Damascus Declaration, and the understanding that exists between them, provides much solidarity which we sorely need. His highness praised the Damascus Declaration member countries and said that they act with a high level of responsibility.

His highness praised the European role toward Arab issues and reaffirmed that Europe has a prominent role regarding the Arabs which we ought to benefit from. His highness the amir then spoke about the Middle East peace process. He called for preparedness to face peace with all capabilities, especially the establishment of an Arab common market, and he pointed out that Kuwait will wait for the outcome of the negotiations between Israel and Syria and Lebanon.

United Arab Emirates

Deposed Qatari Amir Arrives in Abu Dhabi on 'Fraternal Visit'

JN2601071196 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 22 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Abu Dhabi, WAM [EMIRATES NEWS AGENCY] — His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani [deposed amir of Qatar]

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arrived in the country last night on a fraternal visit. He was received by His Highness President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan. [passage omitted]

UAE President Hosts Iftar Banquet for Deposed Qatari Amir

JN2601071696 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 23 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Al-Wathbah, WAM [EMIRATES NEWS AGENCY] — His Highness President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan yesterday received His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani [deposed amir of Qatar] at the presidential retreat in al-Wathbah. His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, Abu Dhabi heir apparent and deputy supreme commander of the Armed Forces, was also present.

His highness the president hosted an iftar banquet in honor of His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Yemeni Foreign Ministry Reacts to Eritrean Statement

JN2501205096 Sanaa Republic of Yemen Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on the final statement issued by the Eritrean National Assembly on 24 January, corresponding to 4 Ramadan, regarding the dispute over the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir, a responsible source at the Foreign Ministry made the following statement to the SABA', the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY:

It is regrettable that in its final statement issued yesterday, the Eritrean National Assembly made some untrue and baseless allegations and claims, thereby reiterating the allegations of the Eritrean leadership without taking the trouble to look for truth and accuracy.

For example, the Eritrean statement said among other things that the Yemeni Government encroached upon Eritrean sovereignty by invading the archipelago of al-Hanish-Zuqar in July 1995 and attacking the Eritrean forces there on 16 December 1995.

We would like to explain the following facts:

1. These are Yemeni islands in the first place. The Eritrean revolution factions used these islands in their war against the Ethiopian forces to achieve independence for Eritrea with our country's approval. If these islands had been actually part of Eritrea, the Ethiopian authorities would not have remained silent on this issue in their capacity as the party with the right to exercise sovereignty over, or the control of, these islands within the context of Ethiopia's control of Eritrea at that time.

2. How could our country invade islands belonging to Yemen? Yemen has long kept a presence in various forms in these islands and has long run their lighthouses.

3. Our country never attacked the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir or other islands in the archipelago, neither in July 1995, nor on 16 December 1995, as the Eritrean National Assembly claimed in its recent statement, unless this assembly considers the arrival of a tourist project contractor on the island as an encroachment or an invasion, despite the fact that the Eritrean Government did not raise this issue at that time.

4. Eritrea did not have forces or a presence on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir or other islands in the archipelago until the dawn of 15 December, and not 16 December as the statement said. At that time, the Eritrean forces attacked the small Yemeni garrison on the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir and seized the island by force. Hence, who is the aggressor? Is it our country or Eritrea?

5. If we had not been certain that Hanish al-Kabir island, like the other islands in the same Archipelago, is historically and geographically Yemeni as confirmed by all international documents and maps in our country's possession, including the map of Eritrea itself before it was recently amended in the wake of the Eritrean command's claim that it owns these islands, we would have been content to maintain a symbolic presence on it.

6. No matter what the Eritrean National Assembly tries to do through its recent statement and what the Eritrean leadership stated or will state to contest our country's right to sovereignty to and ownership of Hanish al-Kabir island, or to accuse our country of committing aggression on it the middle of last December, we are confident that the world at large knows that Eritrea is the one that committed the aggression and that this island was and will remain Yemeni.

7. The claim in the Eritrean statement that our country's authorities took arbitrary measures against some Eritrean citizens residing in Yemen, their second country, is completely false. Perhaps the Eritrean brothers who live with us in our country as brothers are the most qualified to reply to this unfounded claim.

8. The Eritrean statement praised the efforts the Eritrean National Assembly claims that some Yemeni parties are making to settle the dispute peacefully. We have no knowledge at all that such parties or such efforts

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do exist, unless the Eritrean leadership seeks through this to renounce its acceptance of the good offices some fraternal and friendly countries are making and to evade commitment to settling the dispute through arbitration or litigation in accordance with the maritime laws and the principles of international law and international conventions.

The responsible Foreign Ministry source concluded by saying: The Eritrean statement contains fabricated claims and distorted facts which makes it unworthy of any attention. We are confident that the fraternal Eritrean people and international public opinion will not be deceived by the falsehoods in the Eritrean National Assembly's statement and that they know very well which party committed aggression, particularly as the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni Hanish al-Kabir island is recent.

No matter how long the occupation lasts, it cannot cancel our country's right to Hanish al-Kabir island, particularly as the international community does not condone the forcible seizure of the land of others.

Salih Reportedly Agrees To Meet With Eritrea's Afwerki in Cairo

JN2501203096 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 23 Jan 96 pp 1, 30

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, London (AL-ITTIHAD and news agencies) — Egyptian diplomatic sources said yesterday that the Yemeni Government informed Egypt of Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih's approval of a summit in Cairo with his Eritrean counterpart Isaias Afwerki to discuss differences between the two countries on the Red Sea Island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. The sources said that Sanaa made the condition that Eritrea should withdraw its forces gradually from the island before the summit. [passage omitted]

Egyptian diplomatic sources in Cairo said that Cairo has received an urgent Yemeni message within the past two days, in which Yemeni Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani stressed to his Egyptian counterpart 'Amr Musa Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih's readiness to hold a summit with his Eritrean counterpart in Cairo next week to discuss the conflict between the two countries.

The sources told AL-ITTIHAD that Sanaa made the condition that Egypt and Ethiopia, or any mediator between the two countries, should obtain a commitment from Eritrea to withdraw its forces from most of the island, and that the summit should be preceded by arrangements to agree on an agenda and to learn each other's viewpoint about the expected solutions so that the summit will not fail.

The sources added that Egyptian-Ethiopian contacts are currently being held to persuade Eritrea to respond to Yemen's demands. The sources noted that Eritrea responded immediately to the Egyptian-Ethiopian contacts, and that Afwerki said his country canceled its decision to take the conflict to the International Court of Justice, and allowed a highly-placed Eritrean delegation, led by the foreign minister, to hold a meeting with his Yemeni counterpart to prepare for the summit. [passage omitted]

Salih Receives French Envoy, Message on Eritrea Conflict

JN2501180696 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih received a message from French President Jacques Chirac today.

The message deals with the efforts and good offices France is making to resolve differences between our country and Eritrea arising from the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir, as well as ways to contain these differences peacefully based on the commitment to international charters and laws.

The message also expresses France's readiness to continue its endeavors with all parties in a way that will achieve a final and just solution ensuring security, stability, and safety of international navigation in the Red Sea.

The message was conveyed by (Marcel Logel), French ambassador to our country, during his meeting with the brother president today. The president welcomed the French endeavors anew and stressed our country's eagerness to resolve the differences with Eritrea over maritime borders through peaceful negotiations and in accordance with the UN agreement concerning the law of the seas as well as international law.

Israelis Said Jamming Yemeni Radar Over al-Hanish al-Kabir

NC2601104796 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 22 Jan 96 p 16

[FBIS Translated Text] A diplomatic source in Beirut has disclosed that as Yemeni MiG-29 aircraft were flying over al-Hanish al-Kabir island to raid targets, their radars were jammed while still kilometers away from their targets.

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There is no longer any doubt that two Israeli barges stationed in the region were the source of the jamming, the source said.

Yemeni Interior Minister on Possible Political Motive for Clashes

MM2601105196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 26 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Faysal Makram in Sanaa: "Several People Confirmed Killed in al-Mahrah, Political Motive Behind Yafi' Incidents Not Ruled Out"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yemeni Interior Minister Colonel Husayn 'Arab has denied that there is any political motive behind the armed clash which took place the day before yesterday in the port of al-Ghaydah in al-Mahrah province. However, the minister did not rule out that there may be a political motive behind the recent incidents in Yafi', in which several people were killed.

In a statement to AL-HAYAH, 'Arab said that the clash between al-Ghaydah harbor workers and some security and army elements started as an argument between the political security representative at the harbor and the workers' leader over unloading food products from a ship. The argument resulted in some workers attacking and hitting the security representative. One of the security soldiers intervened and fired a few shots in the air, but one of the workers fired his pistol and shot him dead.

The Yemeni interior minister added that "the clash quickly escalated when a worker took advantage of the fact that one of the soldiers was not manning his position, grabbing a medium caliber machine gun and firing at random. Since the army barracks are near the workers' quarters at the harbor, this resulted in three soldiers and one worker killed, and two workers wounded."

He stressed that "investigations are being carried out into this case, which I consider a criminal case with no political motive," pointing out that "16 people who took part in the incident were arrested and are being questioned, and the incident was soon over."

Meanwhile, there have been some developments in the armed clashes which took place some two weeks ago between some citizens and security and army forces in the Yafi' al-Sufla area in Abyan province. The interior minister said: "The clashes were soon over, and calm and security prevail in the region now that the security forces and the army have taken control."

He added that the security organs are still looking for five people who caused the incident after breaking out from the [Yafi'] Directorate [administrative district] jail with the help of some members of their group, having been arrested for possessing heavy weapons and refusing to hand them over to the authorities.

He pointed out that "the director [administrative chief] fell in an ambush after the culprits showed readiness to surrender their weapons to him. The director was killed in the ambush, along with the General People's Congress representative in the region and a soldier of the security forces, plus five other soldiers of the armed forces."

The interior minister did not rule out that there may be a political motive behind the Yafi' incident, but stressed that "the Yemeni security organs consider it a criminal incident. They are still questioning 12 people suspected of laying the ambush, among them four people who took an active part in it. Shaykh 'Abdallah al-'Amudi, the al-Sa'di tribes' chief, has been arrested and is being questioned, while the security organs are still looking for the five who broke out of jail and caused the clashes and who are concealing heavy weapons which must be handed over to government circles."

Some shaykhs and notables of the Yafi' region met with President 'Ali Salih 'Abdallah two days ago and stressed their keenness to solve the problem and restore security and stability in the region. [passage omitted]

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Swiss Firm Handled Nuclear Equipment Now 'Missing' in Iraq

MM2601103996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 26 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Alan George: "Iraq Accused of Concealing German-Made Machine Used in Military Nuclear Industry"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London — It has been revealed that it was a Swiss company that made the arrangements for Iraq to be supplied with a specially designed machine used primarily in manufacturing nuclear bombs, and that the Swiss authorities have not taken any measures, on the grounds that the deal in question does not represent a violation of the rules governing export operations in Switzerland. The authorities said that the machine in question "is missing" in the Middle East region and that a search is under way in a bid to establish its whereabouts.

It has been reported that the arrangements concerning the machine were made by a company, whose name the sources have revealed. The machine uses special technology which was supposed to enable Iraq to implement its plans for the production of advanced carbon fibers for use in enriching uranium to the grade used in the production of nuclear weapon.

The Swiss company submitted a request to acquire the machine from Germany. In February 1991 (during the war to liberate Kuwait), the Iraqi Government instructed the Swiss company to send the machine to Jordan by air freight via Singapore. And indeed it arrived in the Jordanian capital, Amman, in July 1991.

In Bern, a senior official has said that the Swiss authorities were informed of the deal in question only in the fall of 1994. Under Swiss law, even if the deal in question is believed to represent a violation of the law, it took place too long ago and thus no trial can be conducted to look into it.

At any rate, the Swiss company shipped the machine in question to Singapore, not Iraq, and Singapore was not a suspect destination with which dealings were banned.

Contacted by telephone, the Swiss company's director declined to comment on the machine issue.

Sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the machine in question was designed by a German engineer working for a group comprised of British, Dutch, and German companies. The German engineer specialized in upgrading uranium in a laboratory attached to his house, where he prepared basic elements which Iraq used in its military nuclear industry. The German engineer visited Baghdad frequently in the eighties, and in the early eighties he was convicted of violating German export regulations.

A recent report by the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] on Iraq's program says that Baghdad used only the expertise of "an adviser" whose identity is known to the authoritative quarters in the IAEA. The report also says that the material, designs, and assembly technologies offered by the adviser in question were specially designed and fundamental in the Iraqi nuclear program.

Sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the "adviser" in question is in fact the German engineer referred to (his name was given). He designed the machine which was supplied to the Iraqi military industrialization sector. The IAEA report stressed that with the assistance of some of the governments concerned, an investigation was launched in May 1994, and the matter is still under investigation.

The main problem lies in the disappearance of the machine in question, since the Iraqi authorities have said that the machine did not enter Iraq's territory, and a report sent by the IAEA to the [UN] Security Council says that "it is still not known where in Iraq the machine is hidden. However, efforts are continuing to establish its whereabouts."

The most likely assumption is that Iraqi officials provided false information about this issue and that the machine in question is still on Iraqi territory.

Article Addresses Iraqi Nuclear Program

96LH0070A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 22 Dec 95 p 15

[Article by Staff Major General Ahmad 'Abd-al-Halim, head of the Strategic and Military Department of the National Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Cairo]

[FBIS Translated Text] New details have become known about Iraq's nuclear program as a result of the successive UN inspection efforts in Iraq during the past four years. The complete picture we have about the nature of the Iraqi nuclear program clearly shows that Iraq was working on two main programs:

The first: A long-range clandestine nuclear program [last four words in English]. This program concentrated on developing equipment and gaining the necessary experience to produce highly enriched uranium from locally stockpiled materials. Iraq allocated millions of dollars for this program.

The second: A crash nuclear weapon program [last three words in English]. This program began in August 1990, following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The aim of

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this program—which was in addition and parallel to the long-range program—was to produce one nuclear warhead to ensure the strategic balance after the crisis became more complicated and the balance was tilting not in Iraq's favor. Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil, who recently defected to Jordan, initiated this program, because he became impatient about the possibility that the first program would achieve a specific result at the required time. Iraq was supposed to produce such a nuclear warhead by the spring of 1991.

This was the plan for the Iraqi nuclear programs, no matter whether the programs could be implemented or achieve their goals. The two programs were suspended following the coalition forces' air attacks during the Kuwait liberation war, which began in the middle of January 1991. They remained suspended because of the work of the UN inspection commission, which was established under a UN Security Council resolution. This commission began operating immediately after military operations had ceased. Since then, the successive inspection committees have not uncovered any new Iraqi nuclear activity. However, they continued to believe that Iraq will try to resume its nuclear program in the future when international and regional conditions permit, unless a concrete change in Iraqi state and government policy takes place.

Anyway, the impression the UN inspectors gained about the Iraqi nuclear program was more than clear. The Iraqis delivered to the inspection teams more than 140 boxes of documents partly dealing with the nuclear program. Although Iraq's nuclear program—including the crash nuclear-weapon program—was moving slowly because of management problems, internal conflicts, and inadequate technological capability and infrastructure, new information showed that Iraq was ready to use all its resources to obtain nuclear weapons. In this regard, we must note two important points:

1. If Iraq did not invade Kuwait, its long-range nuclear program could have produced sufficient quantities of enriched uranium to build a small nuclear arsenal in 1996.

2. The crash nuclear-weapon program could not have produced nuclear weapons quickly, as planned, because it faced many technical and conceptual problems. The program ended during the attempt to obtain the necessary enriched uranium to produce the planned nuclear head.

Until September 1990—that is, one month after the invasion—Iraq was unable to master any of the several uranium enrichment technologies and the Iraqi technical institutions have not produced a sufficient quantity of enriched uranium to produce nuclear weapons. However, in view of the invasion and the pressure of time, Iraq tried to divert part of the uranium fuel, it obtained from France and Russia for use in nuclear research reactors, to the crash program. Part of this fuel was supposed to be enriched to become suitable for the production of nuclear weapons by adjusting some nuclear technical systems to achieve such a goal. Of course, such a plan could not be implement. Iraq had not built the necessary installations for this. It also had not absorbed the necessary nuclear armament technology for building a bomb or a nuclear warhead. Therefore, we cannot say how long it would have taken Iraq to complete its crash program. Iraq could have made some progress toward achieving this goal, but the coalition forces' air attacks frustrated these efforts.

Iraq obtained uranium from Russia and France for use in two research reactors. When the blockade was imposed, Iraq possessed about 13.7 kg of 80 percent enriched uranium from Russia, 11.9 kg of 93 percent radioactive materials from France, and 0.4 kg of 93 percent enriched materials from France. The Iraqis reported that they planned to use about 11 kg of 80 percent enriched uranium produced by the Russian reactor. Iraq had decided to transfer a total of 36 kg of uranium, enriched 85-87 percent, to the program. Although the UN Atomic Energy Agency began an inspection in Iraq in November 1990, the Iraqis were planning to produce the nuclear warhead, under the crash program, in April 1991 and then confront the world with the fact. Of course, this was unrealistic and impossible because of many technical and technological difficulties.

As in technologically advanced countries, Iraq should have passed through many stages of research and development before it could produce the necessary materials to build nuclear bombs and warheads. Iraq did not possess the necessary elements to successfully complete such research quickly and build the planned nuclear warhead by the specified time (April 1991). Furthermore, because of the lack of technical and technological experience in this field, all the technical operations conducted in this regard caused the loss of many nuclear materials needed in the actual production. Therefore, when the coalition forces' air attacks began, Iraq had only completed the establishment of some of the necessary facilities and installations to start the program. However, it needed another long period to implement the first steps of the program, assuming everything went right. Iraq could not do that for several technical reasons, which we will not discuss now.

If the coalition forces' air attacks did not take place and Iraq was able to solve its technical and technological problems, it could have produced up to 19 kg of 98

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percent enriched materials within three months, from January 1991. It could then try to turn these materials into nuclear weapons, which will demand additional time. Consequently, it would have been impossible to produce the only nuclear bomb—the target of this program—within the time limit.

Shortly after the end of the war, UN inspectors were surprised by the extent of Iraq's nuclear program. This program strongly shocked the international bodies concerned with the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. It revealed the United Nations' shortcomings regarding investigation and data collection procedures and the intelligence shortcomings of all the services concerned, which had led to Israel's ability to build a nuclear arsenal and to Iraq's ability to establish such a nuclear program.

The discoveries of the UN inspection committees led first to the belief that Iraq—when the air campaign began—was within one or two years of producing enriched uranium to build nuclear weapons. However, the inspectors later discovered that the Iraqi nuclear program was facing many problems and difficulties. Thus, they could not confirm whether Iraq could have reached this stage, anyway, during this short time.

The Iraqi nuclear program has been suspended. Observers think that Iraq could resume its program if it had the chance in the future. Iraq still has many cadres to go back quickly and complete its nuclear program. The technical inspection committees also think that Iraq has prepared plans for such a possibility, which it can implement at the appropriate time.

The Iraqi nuclear program was very ambitious. It extended to vast areas of scientific and technological activity, but its results were limited. The Iraqis faced many problems in nuclear and industrial technologies. Consequent they abandoned many secondary programs and expanded other programs more than necessary. The biggest obstacle in this respect was the inadequate technological infrastructures in some fields, particularly those needed to carry out the crash program. This is besides the bad management of the nuclear program. One important reason in this regard was the many bureaucratic conflicts between many groups, each of which was trying to tighten its control over part of the program, while none of them could produce a nuclear bomb alone without the help of others. Each group was responsible to Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil, but he was unable to coordinate between them. Perhaps he deliberately did that to remain the only one in control of the situation.

Anyhow, all the information, which the UN inspection committees could collect, showed that had it not been for the Gulf war and the intensive allied air attacks, Iraq would have produced nuclear weapons and established a small nuclear arsenal by the year 1996. A document obtained by the UN inspection committees noted the possibility that Iraq would make some progress in the production of a nuclear warhead that can be fixed on a surface-to-surface ballistic missile. Another document discussed the deployment of nuclear weapons on aircraft. This shows that Iraq was possibly thinking about building a nuclear bomb that can be dropped by aircraft or about defense against any nuclear attack with aircraft carrying nuclear weapons. The inspection committees made many discoveries in this respect, particularly regarding the nuclear facilities built specially for this program. Many locations prepared for weapons' testing were expected to be used for testing nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless, many defects existed in Iraq's nuclear program, which the inspectors thought would have made it difficult for Iraq to achieve its goals within the established timetable.

Attack on Iraqi Vessel by Kuwaiti Speedboats Protested

JN2501124596 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1050 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 25 Jan (INA)—Iraq informed the UN secretary general that two Kuwaiti speedboats attacked the Iraqi launch, Humaydi, while leaving Khawr al-Zubayr Port on 18 January.

In a letter he sent to UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali, Nizar Hamdun, Iraq's permanent representative at the United Nations, said that the two speedboats, each carrying five military personnel under the command of an officer, circled the Iraqi launch. The soldiers in the speedboats fired shots in the air from their rifles.

Hamdun added that the soldiers from the two speedboats embarked on the Iraqi launch in an aggressive manner; they beat the captain, abused his crew and the port traffic controllers, and ordered the crew to return to Khawr al-Zubayr Port. The speedboats then left after threatening to capture the crew if they did not return.

In his letter, Iraq's UN representative also urged the UN secretary general to shoulder his responsibility and to intervene in accordance with the UN Charter to prevent similar unjustified provocative actions in the future and to hold Kuwait responsible for the consequences of such actions, which will lead to further tension in the region and will harm security and stability.

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Saddam Chairs Cabinet Meeting, Discusses Economy

JN2501200496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1210 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 25 Jan (INA)—President Saddam Husayn said that in all cases, the state will remain committed to the policy of subsidizing locally-produced foodstuffs, particularly grain covered by the ration card as well as all the industrialized agricultural products regardless of the economic situation that may result from positive political developments.

His excellency added that the prices of 1996 would not be less in all cases than those of 1995 as a practical expression of that policy.

While chairing the fifth session of the Council of Ministers in 1996, his excellency stressed the close relationship, which has been maintained between the people and the leadership since the glorious 17-30 July revolution. He said that the people's awareness of the leadership's militant background has made interaction between them a special case.

The president pointed out that this relationship has made the citizen interact with the new plan, which was contained in the leader's message to the Council of Ministers on 2 December of last year despite the difficulties of the unjust blockade. The citizen, he added, is well aware that the state cannot draw up any plan if it does not serve the people and cannot achieve a decisive crossing for all Iraqis with the least possible wounds, with God's help.

The Council of Ministers discussed the economic situation, stressing that it would work enthusiastically to implement the contents of President Saddam Husayn's message, which launched a plan for economic progress to strengthen our people's steadfastness in the face of the unjust blockade.

The Council of Ministers then made a number of decisions and recommendations regarding the topics listed on its agenda.

Article Addresses Change of Iraqi Regime

96LH0071A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Dec 95 p 6

[Article by Amir Tahir]

[FBIS Translated Text] During their meeting in the Jordanian port city of al-'Aqabah, King Husayn of Jordan and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher reopened the file of changing the regime in Iraq. Christopher said that Washington's and Amman's efforts are designed to achieve one objective: ending Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's rule.

The Jordanian monarch's new position constituted a major departure from his previous position, which was characterized by his alliance with Saddam Husayn during the war with Iran and the invasion of Kuwait. The new position also represented a departure from the U.S. wait-and-see policy to serious efforts to change the regime in Iraq.

During the past few days we asked Americans, Arabs, and Iraqis about the nature of the alternative regime they would like to see in Iraq. Their responses were almost the same. They said that the qualifications of the "ideal" future ruler in Iraq are:

- He should be a man, because the presence of a woman at the helm in Iraq now would be dangerous.
- He should be a Muslim, because the Iraqis, at this time, will not accept a Christian or Yazidi president, for example.
- He should be a Sunni, because a Shiite leader will face hostile positions not only from the Sunni Arabs, but also from the Sunni Kurds and the non-Muslim minorities in Iraq. Such a leader will also not find acceptance among the big powers, which fear that he could fall under the Iranian influence.
- He should be a high-ranking military officer. Because of the major role played by the army in the political arena since the establishment of national rule, the army will not accept a civilian leader now.
- He should be a Ba'thist, because the Ba'th Party is the only organized political and parliamentary force in the country, particularly in Baghdad.
- He should be from Tikrit or from its neighboring areas, because the Tikritis control most of the vital junctures in the government, whether we like it or not. If the future leader was selected from among them, perhaps most of them will abandon Saddam. If a hostile figure was chosen, this could make them support Saddam and help him to prolong his term.
- The future leader should come from within Iraq, because the army, the bureaucratic departments, Ba'th Party circles, and the middle class in Baghdad will not accept exiled opposition figures.

Let us imagine that the previous qualifications were placed in an advertisement to fill the post of a ruler of Iraq. Who would be the best qualified person to fill [illegible]

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If we think carefully, we can see that the only person to whom the job specifications apply is Saddam Husayn. He is a Muslim, Sunni, Tikriti, Ba'thist, and lives in Iraq. To be precise, the only qualification that Saddam Husayn does not have is that he is not a military man. He even did not complete his compulsory military service. However, he awarded himself the rank of "staff field marshal." He held the post of the commander in chief of the armed forces in Iraq for more than 20 years. He waged the "mother of battles" and another eight-year war with disastrous results.

If we were to recognize the high military rank of Husayn Kamil Hasan, then we should recognize the rank of the person who granted his rebellious son-in-law all these stars, medal, and decorations.

Most Iraqis and many Western and Arab observers expect, without realizing it, the arrival of another Saddam Husayn, with some differences that would distinguish him from the present Saddam Husayn, to manage the government in Iraq. This is not surprising, because most of the people who follow up Iraqi policy today have become prisoners of the traditional principles that characterize their views of the situation in Iraq. They do not realize that the situation requires rejecting all these illusions and unrealistic ideas contained in these qualifications.

They forget that there are prominent Shiite leaders in Iraq and others who are not Tikritis, Ba'thists, or from the military. There is no reason to stick to the qualifications of leadership, which only apply to less than 1 percent of the people.

What we need is not a change in people, but a review of the overall situation. Iraq's recent troubles were caused by the dictatorial regime, which did not recognize any controls or laws or even the Divine laws and the common moral values.

The hope for salvation in Iraq lies in the search for a leader who lacks all the previous qualifications. The only qualification is for the new ruler to be accepted by most Iraqis.

When we proposed such a view, many of our Arab and Western friends smiled with surprise and disbelief. They scorned our belief that the time has come for the Iraqis to exercise their democratic rights in free and fair elections under international supervision.

One American friend asked with disbelief: "Do you really think that the Iraqis are ready for democracy? Have you gone out of your mind?

Perhaps this friend was right. However, the truth is that the Iraqis have never had the chance to acquaint themselves with democracy to make them decide to reject it.

On the other hand, there is nothing to show the existence of hereditary characteristics among the Iraqis to make them—contrary to all the peoples of the world—unable to choose their leaders and the policies they wish to follow.

One often hears that a civil war will take place in Iraq if Saddam Husayn's regime falls. As an example of what could happen, many people refer to the fighting taking place between the supporters of Barazani and Talabani in the Kurdish security zone.

Does this confirm the reported Iraqis' love for political violence? I do not think so. Barazani and Talabani are tribal leaders and are only interested in money and power. They have dominated the Kurdish arena during the past three decades with the support of one foreign country or another.

However, there are many bright Kurdish figures who can change the course of Kurdish politics if the slightest chance appears in the horizon.

The only way to ensure Iraq's future stability and welfare is to help this country develop a system of government in which politics would not be monopolized by certain butchers and opportunists supported by mercenaries and parasites.

How can this be done? The first step is for prominent Iraqi thinkers and personalities to abandon the traditional principles, which cause them, knowingly or unknowingly, to install a new dictator instead of Saddam Husayn. They must inform the international community, particularly the states that have an interest in Iraqi developments, of their new approach and view of their country's future.

The UN Security Council could then link the lifting of the sanctions with the holding of free and fair elections in Iraq under international supervision. Iraqi opposition parties would also embrace such an approach as the basis for political reform. Undertaking such measures demands much longer time than preparing a coup against Saddam Husayn. However, if such efforts succeed in achieving the desired goals, they would spare the Iraqi people another nightmare under a new dictator.

SAIRI Denounces 'Campaign' Against Ulema, Demands Release

NC2501162196 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] has denounced the

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Bahraini Government's new campaign against religious ulema and senior figures and against the mosques there. It also demanded the release of Shaykh 'Abd-al- Amir al-Jamri and other detainees.

This is contained in a statement issued by the SAIRI's International Relations Department yesterday on the latest developments in Bahrain.

Following is the text of the statement: The Bahraini Government has again handled the public's broad demands with crack downs, arrest, torture, Army deployment in the streets, violent dispersal of demonstrations, mosque closures, bans on prayers in some of these mosques. As usual, the disturbances were blamed on foreign elements.

The authorities repeated their previous mistakes by ignoring the people's demands for the restoration of the constitutional system that has been abolished since 1975 and an improved economic situation. The authorities rearrested the struggling Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri and several of his followers and advocates of the people's demands. The authorities have also carried out extensive arrests since the outbreak of the latest disturbances, involving a large number of Bahraini people. The authorities have also set fires and caused explosions as an excuse to expand their oppressive measures in that country.

We believe that ignoring the people's demands means further instability and volatility. We also believe that responding to the people's view and demands is the right solution to this problem. It would also make them put an end to the current policy of repression and mouthgaging.

The SAIRI denounces the new drive against religious ulema and senior figures and against mosques in the country and demands the immediate and unconditional release of His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd-al- Amir al-Jamri and other detainees. The SAIRI also demands that the armed forces withdraw from the streets and restore freedom to the ulema and mosques so they fulfill perform their religious and social role in society.

Iraqi Kurdish Writer on Turkey's Role in Kurdish Issue

96LH0072A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 21 Dec 95 p 19

[Article by Sami Shorash, an Iraqi Kurdish writer living in Britain]

[FBIS Translated Text] Despite the deep bitterness felt by the Kurds—because Turkey was accepted as a member of the European customs union before it had completely fulfilled the European community's conditions, particularly those pertaining to the cancellation of article eight of the terrorism law (the Turkish parliament approved a minor amendment to this article about two months ago without affecting its essence, which restricts the freedom of opinion) and the release of the six Kurdish parliamentarians detained on charges of calling for secession (the Turkish Government released two of them, while four others are still in prison)—the Kurds could benefit most from the new European-Turkish relations if they politically acted properly. Their benefit is expected to double if Turkey becomes a member of the European Union [EU].

At first, perhaps such a judgment may appear premature or overoptimistic, particularly if we take the bad Turkish-Kurdish relations into consideration. However, a realistic examination of the effects of Turkey's living in the same house with Europe could clarify, to some extent, the soundness of such a premature conclusion.

Turkey's acceptance could end its military and oppressive character, particularly the military establishment's influence on its decisions and actions. Since Mustafa Kamal Attaturk established modern Turkey several decades ago, Turkey has maintained close relations with the Western world, particularly with Europe. However, these were military relations (Turkey's membership in the Western alliances and NATO as clearly manifested during the Kuwait invasion period).

It is true that secularism and Turkey's Western political orientation were a clear factor in these relations. Turkey's proximity to the former Soviet Union and the Central Asian region and its geographical location between east and west have always pushed the economic and political relations to the back, highlighting Turkey's military advantage in Western calculations. This situation often tipped the balance in favor of the military establishment in Turkish political life, with the accompanied oppression and violent approach to the solution of problems. The Kurds were always the first victims of this policy.

However, Turkey's membership in the EU is expected to restore the balance to the shaky nature of the Turkish state, because the political and economic relations will occupy a prominent place in the relations between the two sides. The question of political and economic reform to bridge the gap between Turkey and Europe will become a basic aspect of the new relationship. What confirms this is that the relations with the West, including Europe, now involve political, cultural, economic, and military aspects, especially following the collapse of polarization and the end of the Cold War.

During the Cold War, Turkey or any other developing country could establish purely economic or military

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relations with the West and refuse to establish cultural relations or political alliances with it. The opposite was often true. The requirements of the Cold War and the struggle for influence between the Western and Communist blocs often weakened and caused cracks in international relations.

However, the changes that have taken place in the political situation and system in the world during the past few years changed these formulas. The Westerners, who won the cold war, no longer permitted the countries to select what type of relation they wanted to establish, except in limited exceptional cases. The country that looks for the benefits of economic relations with the West must also consider political and cultural relations with it, improve its human rights' record, and establish the basis for peaceful dialogue and tolerance with peoples and neighbors in the world. The agreements, conferences, and new relations with the West that are taking place in the Middle East today are a good example.

If we go back to the Turkish situation, we will find that the EU and the United States have tried very hard in the past few years to make Turkish officials understand that the deterioration of the situation in Turkey and the dangers inherent in the fundamentalists' assuming power in the country are not enough to make the EU approve Turkey's membership and allow it to benefit from its economic advantages. Tangible steps were needed to improve the political situation in the country and the situation of the minorities in it, led by the Kurds. Turkish officials, particularly in the political establishment, did not object to the European and American views.

However, their attempts in that regard, since the time of the late President Turgut Ozal, always faced internal difficulties. First, they faced the vast power of the military establishment, which maintained a hard-line regarding any progress on the issue of the Kurds and political reforms. Second, they faced the Kurdistan Workers Party, which insisted on violence to solve the problem. Third, they faced the Islamic fundamentalist parties and organizations that were trying to seize any opportunity to make political capital. Furthermore, Turkey's difficult regional situation with Iran and Syria demanded that Turkey carefully calculate every move it makes.

Accepting the Turkish justifications in this regard does not mean that Turkey or the European countries have lost hope about establishing progressive democracy in Turkey, which would contribute to the achievement of internal peace, absorb the Kurds in its framework, and promote Turkey's economic role in the new Middle East. It means, in the worst scenario, that Turkey's difficulties on the path to democracy demand that it be brought into the European community to give it a new chance and new stimulants to overcome these difficulties and open the way to democracy. Democracy in Turkey or any other country cannot be established with the push of a button. It must develop gradually. Is not the European economic aid to Turkey limited by a period of five years? Would it not be fair, then, to call on Turkey to improve its internal political situation within a limited or unlimited period?

The Kurdish benefit from Turkey's admission to the customs union and then to the EU is not limited to such general expectation. It will be manifested—if the Kurds correctly seize the political chance—in many other fields. Industrial and economic development resulting from the European aid to Turkey will undoubtedly bring economic prosperity to the Kurdish areas also. If the state does not treat the Kurdish areas on equal footing as the other Turkish areas, the laws, the civil institutions, and the elected bodies, which would witness continuous progress in the new situation of the Turkish state, will end their injustices in legal and legitimate ways. The killing, the burning of villages, and the destruction directed against the Kurds could noticeably ease. The chances of solving their national problem peacefully and politically could increase, especially as the Kurdish problem, after Turkey is admitted to the EU, will become a European problem and will receive the sympathy and support of the other EU members.

In the final analysis, the Kurds will be among the first to benefit from Turkey's membership in the EU. This might not happen tomorrow, but will happen after a certain long or short time. This is because Europe cannot continue to deal with a non-European Turkey, which is not democratic, not open, and not free in its political and economic policies. This, in itself, is a great benefit, which the Kurds and the Kurdistan Workers Party must exploit wisely.

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Israeli Ministers Said Sure No Accord With Syria Before Elections

TA2501133896 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 24 Jan 96

[Report by Nisim Mish'al]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem officials have accepted the fact that the negotiations with Syria will have to be postponed until after the Israeli elections. Labor Party ministers say that Syria's intransigent stands are liable to cause us electoral damage. The gaps are big, and they cannot be bridged in the remaining time before the elections, they claim.

Minister Efrayim Sne says, and it is direct quote: An unsound agreement with the Syrians will be bad for the ballots, while a good and serious agreement will be good both for the state and the ballots. However, because of the gaps — mainly in the field of security arrangements — I do not see how a good agreement can be achieved before October 1996.

Minister Yosi Sarid told us that he was under the impression that Jerusalem has decided not to do business with the Syrians this year. He went on to attack Minister Ehud Baraq in the following words: As foreign minister, Baraq should be the primary promoter of the peace process with Syria, but instead of doing that, he has been transmitting hesitations and doubts and hampering the negotiations more than any other cabinet minister. Consequently, one wonders about Minister Baraq's attitude toward the negotiations with Syria.

Minister 'Uzi Bar'am holds a similar opinion. The talks with Syria, he says, are going to be deep-frozen in concurrence with an understanding with the Syrians that for Israel, this is the wrong time for in-depth discussions and tough decisions. In my opinion, Bar'am added, we have already embarked on a path that leads to early elections, and the only open issue is how it will be done.

Minister Ben-Eli'ezer says: I am for early elections in any event, because no government can function properly as long as it is chained to the Knesset for three days every week because of the tiny majority it has.

Thus, the consensus in Jerusalem is that after Christopher's visit to the region in mid-February, Israel will decide on early elections.

Netanyahu: No Conceding Golan, 'Nonconventional Capabilities'

TA2501165196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu says he will not give up the Golan Heights and Israel's nonconventional capabilities even in exchange for a peace treaty which will include Iran, Iraq, and Libya. Netanyahu made these remarks in a meeting of REFA'EL [Armament Development Authority] workers this afternoon. Our correspondent Haviva Roger reports:

[Begin Netanyahu recording] Let us say somebody comes and proposes a heavenly and extraordinary peace treaty which everyone will sign. Even if this treaty includes a promise by all parties to get rid of their nonconventional capabilities — nuclear, chemical, biological, everything — even if Rafsanjani, Saddam Husayn, al-Qadhdhafi, and al-Asad sign this treaty, I will not sign it. Is there any sane person who would state that in exchange for such peace or such a peace treaty or such a commitment he would give up the security arrangements or our defensive capabilities in case we have mistaken the other side's intentions? Let me tell you that nothing in the world would induce me to give up these capabilities, because there is no other way to secure real peace in the real Middle East — not in the new Middle East that exists in a certain person's imagination. I will not give up the Golan Heights, our nuclear capabilities, or REFA'EL in exchange for words and written promises. [end recording]

Israel's Baraq on Early Elections; Relations With Cuba, Libya

TA2501190596 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Ya'aqov Ahime'ir video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Wye Plantation talks are resuming this evening. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will join today's talks. Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, in the United States, says he supports early elections, although he believes that this should not be linked to the talks with Syria. Our correspondent Ya'aqov Ahime'ir reports from the United States:

[Begin recording] [passage omitted] [Ahime'ir] Foreign Minister Baraq says we should not be frightened by the prospects of early elections.

[Baraq] I already told you that we do not have total control over the negotiations with Syria, because some 50 percent of what is happening depends on Syria. We are also not fully in control of the results of the elections to be held in several months. It is impossible

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to hold elections overnight. I believe, therefore, that the opposition will decide this issue: If it continues with its problematic policy of preventing the government from working effectively by holding the ministers hostage in the Knesset around the clock for days on end, then unfortunately we will have to hold early elections.

[Ahime'ir] Is this the present parliamentary picture?

[Baraq] This has been the situation recently. However, this issue should not be linked to the negotiations with Syria. The government is obliged to operate until the last day while not being frightened by early elections.

[Ahime'ir] The foreign minister is currently holding meetings at the United Nations. Baraq told us he does not rule out relations between Israel and Cuba or Libya's al-Qadhdhafi. [end recording]

Israeli Commentary: U.S. Disillusioned About Syria Deal

TA2501123396 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (HAYOM supplement) in Hebrew 25 Jan 96 p 2

[Commentary by Avino'am Bar-Yosef in Washington: "Back to Planet Earth"]

[FBIS Translated Text] When, after Yitzhaq Rabin was murdered, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres announced that Israeli elections would be held on time, the Americans believed him. When, during his tour of Washington, he told them that "attaining peace is more important than winning the elections," they sighed with relief. The Americans work by the book, and "by the book" they have nearly a year to attain an arrangement with Syria.

In the first round of Wye Plantation talks three weeks ago, progress was made, at least in terms of listening ability. Where al-Asad is concerned, this is not chicken feed. The past four years were marked with negotiations between the deaf, with him sitting stiff in his chair and the Americans sitting in the opposite chair with bursting bladders. Now, he moved to the table and they felt encouraged, believing this to indicate that he has agreed to, at least, open his ears.

The Syrian president may have at least three good reasons to cultivate this illusion. He estimated that:

a. Clinton and Peres believe that a joint picture with Arab leaders will win them votes;

b. Christopher believes he deserves an arrangement before he retires, so he will have stories to tell his grandchildren;

c. Uri Savir's ambition will not allow him to return from Wye with less than he brought from Oslo.

It is no wonder, therefore, that when Israelis choose this time to begin speaking about moving the elections forward, the U.S. Administration was shocked. When it comes to the Middle East, they are quite naive. Not only do they believe in "al-Asad's integrity," they have started building a theory based on the assumption that Peres personally considers a historic picture on the White House lawn more important than leading Labor to victory in elections for the first time in his life.

On the eve of the resumption of the Wye Plantation talks, the U.S. elections assumed a new meaning. The fact that Mrs. Clinton has been summoned to testify in court has dwarfed the impact a Middle East arrangement would have in the U.S. elections. Just as Clinton's status began gaining strength, it became apparent that only one thing threatens his political future: the Whitewater wild card. Last week, the wild card went berserk, yet the administration found time to deal with the Israeli elections.

During his last visit to Israel, Peres had a heart-to-heart with Christopher, sharing his pain regarding the date of the elections. The Americans understand he will not pass on his last chance of ever winning an election. They understand that he believes that success at Wye erodes his popularity in Israel.

When Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq went to Washington this week, they realized that the decision had been made: Elections will be held before Israelis go abroad for their summer vacations. The Americans who met Baraq — from Clinton to the Congressmen — were impressed by the analytic skills and the well-balanced stands the former chief of staff presented. They realized that when he says that the political process should not be squeezed into the elections timetable, he is telling them not to count on having a year to attain an arrangement.

They also realized that, even if Peres does not make Baraq party to very important decisions, it is enough for Baraq to show an unhappy face to shatter their dreams of an Israeli public support for an arrangement with Syria.

Perhaps this is why the administration reached the conclusion that two levels of achievements are needed to promote the political process. One, modest and operational, could provide some fuel with which to continue the negotiations. They believe they can get that from al-Asad, which is why they were optimistic last month. The other level is much higher, and connected with satisfying Labor's need to win the elections. Even the tireless optimists in Washington do not believe that Damascus intends to deliver these goods at this time.

Al-Asad may calculate that he cannot lose in any event. He can try to score a tacit Israeli promise, backed with

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U.S. guarantees, to withdraw to the 4 June 1967 line without him paying with the currency of normalization. He may believe that it will be worth his while to put such a commitment in his pocket, so that he can make it happen after the elections, with the help of U.S. pressure, even if the Likud comes to power.

This, however, has not happened yet. The American textbooks do not say this. This does not match their interests or Israeli interests. This is not the historic photo Clinton and Peres sought to score before their elections. This does not even promote the careers of several U.S. and Israeli officials. But, when it comes to al-Asad, one never knows. After all, so far he has managed to collect a price every time Israel delayed the negotiations. Why should he not benefit from advancing the Israeli elections?

Beilin: No Peace Unless Jerusalem Acknowledged as Capital

TA2501163596 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Minister Yosi Beilin informed the Palestinians today that unless they recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, he sees no point in carrying on the peace process. Minister Beilin made these remarks at a Bar Ilan University symposium. Our correspondent Baraq Ronen was there:

[Begin recording] [Ronen] Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. This fact may be obvious to us Israelis, but as Yosi Beilin reminded us, the rest of the world has not come to share our view as yet. The United States, the European countries, and in fact, everyone will leave their embassies in Tel Aviv until the Palestinians declare their acceptance of Israeli sovereignty in this special city. Thus, Beilin says, the Palestinians are not the only ones with demands concerning the status of Jerusalem, and it is time they started taking our demands with regard to the city seriously.

[Beilin] I will not leave the negotiating table without obtaining Palestinian recognition of the fact that Jerusalem is my capital. And I think it can be achieved. And if it cannot be achieved, there will be no peace, as far as I am concerned.

[Ronen] Beilin, who addressed a symposium on political violence at Bar Ilan University today, also discussed the issue of settlements. In his view, most of the settlers will not have to be evacuated when the permanent status agreement with the Palestinians is implemented, because they will remain on territory that Israel will annex by law and with international recognition after nearly 30 years of de facto rule. Who knows, the minister wondered; perhaps the settlers will realize that to guarantee the future of the settlements, they will do better to vote for the left wing in the next elections. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Saudi Shaykh Said on 'Secret Visit' to Israel for Economic Talks

TA2601100996 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 26 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Ilana Baum]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel has asked Saudi Arabia to allow El Al flights over its airspace. In addition, Israel asked to set up an interest office in Saudi Arabia.

Israel had the opportunity to relay its requests directly to the Kingdom, without U.S. mediation, when a Saudi shaykh associated with the royal family paid a secret visit to Israel last week. While in Israel, the shaykh met Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan and Israeli businessmen, with whom he examined options of establishing economic ties.

It has been learned that the Saudi shaykh believes that if Israel signs a peace accord with Syria, Saudi Arabia will also sign a peace agreement with Israel.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Comments on Pollard

TA2601080796 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 26 Jan 96 p 2

[ITIM report]

[FBIS Translated Text] "Jonathan Pollard is a U.S. citizen serving a prison term for crimes he has committed," U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk said, reacting to the bestowal of Israeli citizenship on Pollard at a special ceremony on 24 January.

The U.S. ambassador made the remarks at the conclusion of his address to the Rotary Club at the Hilton Hotel in Tel Aviv. He refused to make any further comment on the Pollard issue.

Israeli Government, Ultra-Orthodox Deal on New City Reported

TA2501193496 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen video report]

[FBIS Translated Text] We are opening this evening with a political deal between the Peres government and the ultra-Orthodox parties. Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer will submit for the government's approval a plan for establishing a new ultra-Orthodox city across the Green Line, adjacent to Qiryat Sefer in the Modi'in area. At the background of this plan

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is an understanding with the ultra-Orthodox parties to the effect that they will not support no-confidence motions against the government. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports on the new ultra-Orthodox city and the politics behind it:

[Begin recording] [Rosen] These hills were the central issue discussed at a secret meeting held at Minister Ben-Eli'ezer's office one month ago. The meeting was also attended by Minister Yosi Beilin, Finance Minister Avraham Shohat, Justice Minister David Liba'i, Agudat Yisra'el Knesset Member [MK] Avraham Verdiger, Degel Hatorah MK Avraham Ravitz, National Religious Party MK Yig'al Bibi, and SHAS' [Torah Observing Sephardim] Arye Der'i. The main issue discussed was the need for a new ultra-Orthodox city. Here, near Qiryat Sefer, the ultra-Orthodox circles want to build a city including 13,000 housing units — 3,500 in the first stage. The name of the new city is slated to be Matityahu, which is to be located in the territories across the Green Line, in what is known as the Greater Jerusalem area.

The last obstacle to the establishment of the new city is the approval of the Ministerial Committee on Construction in the Territories, a committee established approximately one year ago after the scandal that followed the uncovering of Construction and Housing Ministry building plans for the Greater Jerusalem area.

According to at least two of the participants, during the meeting MK Arye Der'i presented his ultra-Orthodox colleagues with the possibility of a political deal: Der'i said that their abstention during no-confidence votes against the government would improve the chances of the ministerial committee's approving the construction of the new city.

Ben-Eli'ezer is demanding that the committee, headed by the prime minister, convene within 10 days to approve the new city. He fears that press reporting on the initiative may foil the plan, seeing that sharp criticism has already surfaced within the coalition.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] The ultra-Orthodox community in Israel is suffering from a severe housing shortage, and it is our duty to take care of them as we do with any other Israeli citizen.

[Tourism Minister 'Uzi Bar'am] This is an altogether stupid idea. Is this the right time to establish a new city in the territories? The problem we are facing right now is what to do with the cities that are there already.

[Rosen] The prime minister knows this story is a political bombshell. Whatever decision he adopts, he cannot come out of this affair looking good. Some of his associates are already advising him to delay the convening of the ministerial committee as much as possible. [end recording]

MK Ran Kohen, chairman of the Meretz Knesset faction, says that Labor is playing with fire. We are sick and tired of finding out again and again that Labor is hatching plans against government policy right under our own noses, Kohen said.

MK's Deny Deal With Government on New Ultra-Orthodox City

TA2601120396 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 26 Jan 96 pp A1, A2

[Report by Ziv Ma'or, Yerah Tal, Shahar Ilan, and ITIM]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer said yesterday that he will submit his plan for the marketing of several thousand housing units across the Green Line for the approval of the Ministerial Committee for Construction in the Territories, slated to convene in 10 days.

The minister referred, among other items, to the plan for the establishment of a new ultra-Orthodox neighborhood to be named Matityahu. The neighborhood will be adjacent to the Hashmona'im neighborhood and in the vicinity of Qiryat Sefer, which is situated inside the Green Line. The three neighborhoods will evidently form one settlement comprising some 12,000 housing units at the end of the process.

Another plan that will be brought up for the ministerial committee's approval is a 900-apartment zone in Betar, an ultra-Orthodox settlement near the 'Etzyon Bloc, and several zones in the "Greater Jerusalem" area, such as Har Adar. [passage omitted]

Ben-Eli'ezer further said that the construction plans for Qiryat Sefer, Matityahu, and Hashmona'im have been discussed for a long time and some have received approval, and that they are totally unrelated to the recent contacts with the religious factions concerning a safety net for the government. [passage omitted]

Knesset Member [MK] Arye Der'i yesterday denied the reports that ultra-Orthodox elements have promised the government not to support antigovernment no-confidence motions in exchange for the approval of the new town's plans. According to Der'i, there is neither written nor oral agreement whereby SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] would do so in exchange for construction permits. [passage omitted]

MK Avraham Ravitz, the Degel Hatora chairman, said: "The government has granted a construction permit in Matityahu without receiving anything in return. It had

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been promised to us a long time ago by Rabin, and Peres said he would abide by the promise. There is no agreement or oral commitment. An agreement will be possible only if they accept all eight terms we submitted."

MK Avraham Shapira from Agudat Yisra'el said: "We will not make agreements in exchange for apartments. They should amend the conversion law and settle the matter of grave excavations, but all Peres did was set up a committee, and a committee is nothing. There is absolutely no agreement. The opposite is true. At first they negotiated in nice tones, but nothing came out of it."

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'Tense Debates' Reported in Jordan's Parliament

JN2501134996 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 25-26 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Tariq Mumani; "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Wednesday's [24 January] session of the Lower House of Parliament was characterised by hot outbursts, tense debates, and fiery exchanges of accusations.

Apart from the unprecedented exchange of accusations between Deputy Tujan Faysal and the government, the session witnessed a heated discussion between House Speaker Sa'd Hayil al-Surur and Islamist Deputy 'Abd-al-Munim Abu-Zant as well as the resignation of the chairman and several members of the House's Law Committee.

Mr. al-Surur fiercely shielded himself against accusations of unfair treatment of fellow deputies levelled by Shaykh Abu-Zant.

"We never knew you acting as an umbrella for injustice, and I only intend—through these words—to protect you from the torment of hell," said Shaykh Abu-Zant, following a discussion of Article 104 of the House's bylaw which empowers the speaker to interrupt and stop speakers under the dome in specified cases.

Mr. al-Surur replied to Mr. Abu-Zant: "You cannot appoint yourself as the one who protects people from or sends them to hell. This is only done by God."

"None of us should claim monopolising wisdom; We too know the Holy Koran and know religion too well," Mr. al-Surur said.

Also on Wednesday, the chairman of the Law Committee and several of its members said they were resigning after differences in views among them over one of the committee's recent decisions surfaced during House discussions.

Deputies 'Abd-al-Baqi Jammu and 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah—who is also deputy prime minister and education minister—said they were quitting the committee because of the inconsistency in the positions of some of the committee's members.

The committee's chairman, 'Abd-al-Karim al-Dughmi, announced then that he was resigning for the same reason, saying: "I see that the committee's decisions have no committee members to support them under the dome. I really wonder why some of the members support such decisions in the committee meetings and then change their minds under the dome. I declare that I am resigning as chairman and member in the committee and declare that I will never join it."

Mr. al-Surur intervened in an attempt to calm things down, urging the committee members to meet and to agree no to oppose committee decisions during floor debates.

The House also heard proposals by several deputies and replies by ministers to deputies' queries.

Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said Jordan did not deport Iranian diplomat Saeed Al Batini [name as published] but had declared him persona non grata.

Replying to a question by Islamist Deputy Dhib 'Abdallah, Mr. al- Kabariti said the incident "does not contravene Jordan's sincere desire to have excellent relations with all countries of the world, including Islamic ones, on the basis of mutual respect.

Deputy 'Abdallah countered by saying that Mr. Batini's [name as published] tenure in Jordan had ended and he was about to leave without being asked to.

"He could have left without having all that commotion that undermines relations with Islamic Countries, including Iran," said Mr. 'Abdallah.

Jordan's al-Kabariti Leaves for Gaza To Consolidate Relations

JN2501180096 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An official Jordanian delegation led by Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti left Amman for Gaza this afternoon to convey the congratulations of His Majesty King Husayn and the Jordanian people and Government to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and members of the Legislative Council who were elected freely and fairly.

The foreign minister will hold official talks with Palestinians on efforts to consolidate relations between the two states and fraternal people. They will also review peace efforts and coordinate positions in this regard.

The delegation includes House of Representatives members and senior Foreign Ministry officials.

In a statement to the JORDANIAN NEWS AGENCY, al-Kabariti said the recent elections were the answer to everyone who cast doubts on the proud Palestinian people's freedom of choice or on the legitimacy of their institutions and leadership. The elections were a success for the Palestinian people and a victory for democracy and peace. This visit, he added, comes at a critical stage in the ongoing struggle of a heroic people who have struggled, established their presence, and carved their

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name with the blood of their righteous martyrs in the annals of history. They fought the battle of peace with wisdom, ability, and patience and surmounted all the challenges and obstacles.

Al-Kabariti asserted Jordan's support for the Palestinian National Authority and its efforts to build the state and its institutions, as well as its efforts in conducting peace negotiations with wisdom, patience, and determination.

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Lebanon's al-Hirawi Emphasizes Need To Liberate South

NC2501192096 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi has announced that the state has completed drawing up its files [malaffat] on negotiations [with Israel] based on Resolution 425. He added that the opportunity for peace is drawing closer as Israeli withdrawal from the south, the Western al-Biqa', and the Golan draws near. The state is ready to establish security on the borders, he continued.

In his speech [at a Ramadan fast-breaking banquet], President al-Hirawi focused on the need for equal development in the provinces and for educational and social structuring. He said national peace can be enhanced by the citizens.

He recalled the need to liberate the south and Western al-Biqa' and stressed the need for cohesion and solidarity at this time. He emphasized that national unity is necessary to save society, secure the country's existence as an entity, and guarantee the future.

He urged the Lebanese people to have confidence in the security system and the judiciary and to stop denying this nation's achievements.

Amal Movement Attacks, Israeli Shelling in Lebanon Reported

NC2501203696 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Amal Movement has announced that one of its groups attacked the Israeli post of al-Tuhrah with machine guns and rockets at 1450 today and that fires were seen rising from the post.

Ten minutes later, the movement added, Amal men ambushed a Lahdist [South Lebanese Army—SLA] patrol on the al-Tuhrah Road. An armored personnel carrier was destroyed and injuries were inflicted on infantry personnel, according to the Amal Movement statement.

Elsewhere, the hills east of Kafr Rumman Town, the army's derelict barracks in al-Nabatiyah, the woods of al-Nabatiyah al- Fawqa, and the Habbush bridge came under concentrated artillery shelling from Israeli posts at 1500.

The Amal Movement statement added that another group attacked the al-Qusayr post with machine guns and rockets at 1610 today while a third group attacked the Israeli forces' post of 'Alman.

'Terrorists' Attack SLA Position in Lebanon

NC2501151996 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The South Lebanese Army [SLA] position in Kafr Rumman was subjected to volleys of machine-gun fire and rockets from terrorist positions southeast of Kafr Rumman today. The attack caused no casualties, and the position's personnel returned fire with appropriate weapons.

Hizballah Denies Detaining 3 Swedes in Beirut

NC2501184596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1745 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 25 Jan (MENA)—This evening Hizballah denied that it had detained three Swedish nationals in Beirut's Southern Suburb and then released them after interrogating them.

A Swedish newspaper has reported that Hizballah detained the three men for some time. They were policemen who were touring the area in civilian clothes.

[Paris AFP in French at 1736 GMT on 25 January in a Stockholm-datelined item adds the following: "Three Swedish secret policemen were detained and questioned in Beirut by Lebanese identifying themselves as members of the militant Islamic movement Hizballah, a newspaper said Thursday [25 January].

["SVENSKA DAGBLADET said the members of the Saepo secret police were stopped late last week in the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital, a stronghold of the militant group.

["The policemen were 'sightseeing' and taking photographs outside a mosque, after having escorted a Lebanese man who was expelled from Sweden, when they were detained for two hours, the newspaper said.

["But Hizballah, contacted by AFP in Beirut, 'categorically denied the report, which was completely fabricated.'"]

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Syrian Ambassador to Turkey Denies Syria Aiding PKK

NC2501154196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1435 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ankara, 25 Jan (MENA)—Syrian Ambassador to Turkey 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rifa'i has denied Turkish accusations that six trucks laden with weapons seized at Turkish-Syrian border terminals were en route to Syria. In an exclusive statement to a MENA correspondent in Ankara, the ambassador said the trucks were Turkish, the drivers Turks, and the transport company Turkish. The trucks set out from Iran on their way to Lebanon through Syrian territory. So there is no evidence to substantiate Turkey's accusations. He added that these accusations are false and aim to cloud the cordial relations between Turkey and Syria.

Turkish Interior Minister Teoman Unusan said yesterday that it had become clear to the Turkish authorities that the weapons and ammunition on the trucks were being sent to PKK bases in Syrian- controlled areas in Lebanon.

Syrian Media on Maryland Talks, U.S. Participation

JN2601075096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 26 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-THAWRAH comments today on the Maryland talks. The paper says: Syria wants to achieve peace based on the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle. Syria is participating honestly and seriously in the Maryland talks, which attracted much attention and generated much optimism. Syria wants the Maryland talks to result in something new to advance the peace process toward its noble objective. Progress remains only a hope until Israel declares its full commitment to the principles of peace, including full withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines and instituting balanced [mutawazinah] and equitable [mutakafi'ah] security arrangements on both sides of those lines. Israel must also implement Resolution 425 on full withdrawal from southern Lebanon. Israel has not done this yet.

AL-THAWRAH says the optimism that surrounds the Maryland talks is inspired only by Washington's emphasis on playing the role of an active and full partner in the talks. This is clear in the direct participation of U.S. Secretary Christopher in the talks. No doubt, the United States has many ways to make Israel respond to the principles of the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH notes that so far nothing has changed in the Israeli position on the ground to justify optimism about the outcome of the talks.

The paper concludes that Syria has adopted a firm and principled position on peace. Syria wants a just and comprehensive peace, based on international legitimacy.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: Observers agree that the third round of the Maryland talks is important. This round resumed two days ago with the participation and sponsorship of the United States. Observers also agree that there is a real and precious opportunity that should be seized to advance the peace process and achieve a breakthrough on the Syrian track. The purpose of this is to achieve a just and comprehensive peace, based on the Madrid frame of reference, the resolutions of international legitimacy, the land- for-peace principle, Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon, and a return to the 4 June 1967 lines.

AL-THAWRAH says this requires Israel to take a clear stance and declare unequivocally its commitment to the Security Council resolutions, withdrawal, returning the land, and abandoning its impossible demands and conditions, which have stalemated the peace process and prevented it from achieving progress.

AL-THAWRAH points out that the security arrangements that should follow Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon must be based on equitability [al-takafu'], equality [al-tasawi], and parallelism [al-tawazi] on both sides of the 4 June lines. These arrangements must also achieve the security of all parties. Otherwise, they will remain formal and fragile measures that could be easily violated. Peace must be just and comprehensive to preserve the security, interests, and dignity of all parties. Nothing else can guarantee the viability of this peace. The Israelis must understand this and must realize that peace and occupation do not mix. The Israelis have no choice but to acknowledge Syria's rights in full.

AL-BA'TH says statements by Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq depart from the atmosphere of optimism and the hopes pinned on the Maryland talks. Many observers viewed these statements as a return to the intransigent stands of the Rabin government, if not to the more intransigent stands of the Shamir government.

The paper notes that Baraq spoke about water, security, and normalization as if the peace process and the principles on which it is based contain only those headings. Baraq completely ignored the essence of the peace process, which revolves around full withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines.

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The paper adds: The Israeli foreign minister is not the only Israeli official who has adopted such a position. The whole world has not heard an unambiguous Israeli commitment to the essence of the peace process. This means that the obstruction will continue and doubts will linger over the Maryland talks.

AL-BA'TH adds: At any rate, the U.S. position inspires optimism. U.S. Secretary of State Christopher took part in the first round and in this round. Christopher's statements gave a positive impression.

The paper concludes that the latest statements by Israeli officials are contrary to what observers had expected. This definitely does not serve the Maryland talks, which seek to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Syrian Radio Analyzes 'New Round' of Maryland Talks

JN2501150596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1238 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] A new round of negotiations began in Maryland on 24 January. Expectations—by observers and those concerned with the Middle East peace process—preceded this round, as expectations do with any round of negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track. Regardless of the optimism, expectations, or caution expressed, all of these observers hope that this round will result in real progress. This is because it is impossible for the peace process to end its fourth year and to enter its fifth year, during which the U.S. secretary of state made 16 tours of the region in addition to other U.S. envoys' tours, without making real progress commensurate with these efforts despite statements about optimism, new ideas, and breakthroughs, and the setting of specific dates to achieve the expected progress. On the contrary, only recently— specifically last summer—because of the Israeli intransigence, the peace process became dormant. It awakened approximately a month ago, when the current round of these negotiations began on 27 December. Everyone concerned with the peace process hopes that this round of negotiations will result in real progress: They all believe that the negotiations are not an end, and that the target is not negotiations but the true achievement of these negotiations to compensate for the years that have passed uselessly, taking into consideration that making real progress could have been possible if the Israeli side had not involved the talks in procedural issues and impossible demands that conflict with the bases and pillars of peace. The realization of peace necessitates sincere intentions and serious action. This means that peace should be adopted as a strategic option through measures that are in harmony with the resolutions of international legitimacy. The first of these measures is that Israel should clearly announce that it is determined to fully withdraw from occupied Golan and southern Lebanon to the 4 June 1967 lines. However, it should not link this to internal issues, such as elections. This announcement is a necessary Israeli step to achieve progress in the peace process, especially since Syria has fulfilled its national, pan-Arab, and international obligations to the peace process when it has clearly announced its stand. Peace is Syria's strategic option. It supports full peace for full withdrawal, and with even [mutasawiyah], equitable [mutakafi'ah], and balanced [mutawazinah] security arrangements on both the Syrian and Israelis sides. The guarantee of all sides' security and safety is peace itself. In light of this, everyone concerned with the peace process in the region, in addition to international public opinion and leaders who have strongly stressed the importance of the Middle East peace for their peoples and states, are following the current Maryland talks without pessimism or optimism, but with hope that this round will result in real progress to bring the region closer to a comprehensive peace. This is particularly true because the U.S. Administration, which sponsors the negotiations and participates in them strongly and actively, announced that it wants to achieve progress at this round and over the next months. Peace is made by two sides, not one side. Syria has done what it should do for peace, so Israel should do what it should do for the sake of this peace. Moreover, the U.S. cosponsor should play the role expected from it in this regard to achieve a just and comprehensive peace.

Syrian Editorial Urges Israeli Leaders To Have 'Courage' for Peace

JN2501123796 Damascus SYRIA TIMES in English 23 Jan 96 p 5

[Editorial by Fu'ad Mardud: "For the Sake of Pesce"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Genuine peace that can survive in the Middle East won't come if the leaders of Israel continue lacking the sufficient courage to respond to the basic requirements to withdraw from territory they have illegally occupied since 1967 first, and if the Clinton Administration continues gripping on what U.S. former Secretary of State James Baker described as "constructive ambiguity."

In order to forge a new era of security and stability in the Middle East and not to make the peace talks hostage to the Israel internal politics in the year of the general elections for the Knesset, Israel's Prime Minister Shim'on Peres should gather courage to spell out that magic word that certainly will break new ground in

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the search for a comprehensive Middle East and which Syria has been waiting for—that is withdrawal. He may use the new round of the Maryland's talks as a forum, or to appear before the Israeli Knesset to announce Israel's readiness to evacuate the entire Golan Heights. This may work as a thunder that breaks out through dark clouds.

When President Hafiz al-Asad offered the "peace of the brave", he was quite sure that Syria is the most important key to the achievement of an enduring and comprehensive peace that finally will put an end to the long Arab Israeli conflict, and that the success on the Syrian Israeli track of the current Middle East peace process is vital to all other agreements between Israel and any other Arab side.

Therefore, the prospects of a final-status talks need a new mechanism for resolving the disputes more openly on one hand, and courage from Mr. Peres to tell the Israelis that they should accustom themselves to live without the Golan simply because it is "not ours" and we—the Israel—could not continue occupying it any longer.

The Maryland talks constitute a hopeful sign, but unless there is a breakthrough very soon, the whole process for making peace will come to a dangerous recess. The attempts of the Israeli leaders to lower public expectation have to be halted, and the hopes—if they are not false—have to be raised.

Washington is well positioned to do so. The Bush and the Clinton administrations have got the peace process going almost four years— despite some periods of intermittent stalemate with a formula that once described the "only available opening" capable of creating the precise mechanism to accomplish the job designated by the U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 425 which mandate the exchange of land for peace. The Maryland talks may find some ways for progress by putting everything on the table, but until the Israelis summon the courage to move forward, no real breakthrough is likely to occur. The United States—as the sole actual sponsor of the talks—needs to address all issues more openly, as far as Israel's government prefers to shun some of them mainly withdrawal, or to deal with it with an obscure manner.

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Afghanistan

Iranian Mediation Offer Reportedly Divides Kabul Government

BK2401101596 Karachi DAWN in English 24 Jan 96 p 18

[Report by Abdul Sarni Paracha]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar, Jan 23 — Differences between Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Mas'ud over Iran's mediation offer to Pakistan and Afghanistan have divided the entire administrative machinery in Kabul, including the intelligence agency Khad into pro and anti-Pakistan groups, it is learnt.

Those favoring Pakistan are on the side of President Rabbani and the others with Mas'ud group. Highly placed sources told Dawn on Tuesday that for the last six months Rabbani had been held hostage by the Mas'ud forces in his own palace, but now the former has picked up some courage after the intervention by Iran, which brings hope for the establishment of friendly ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The pressure on Rabbani for a rapprochement with Pakistan from his own allies, too, has been immense.

They have received many set-backs in the recent past in the shape of arrests, closure of their missions and expulsion of the Afghan consul-general in Peshawar. The ransacking of the Pakistan embassy in Kabul in which the miscreants manhandled the staff and even killed an employee, also helped step up efforts to bring the two countries closer.

Retired agents of Khad told Dawn on Tuesday that Mas'ud forces would give a tough time to the latest efforts for ending the stalemate between Islamabad and Kabul. But they said if Rabbani and Pakistan accepted Iran's offer sincerely, their disputes could be settled permanently.

The Khad agents who defected a decade back, are in Pakistan and at times have helped the sensitive agencies about the activities of their erstwhile agency.

They suggest it is a golden opportunity for the trio-Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran-to solve the problem once and for all, warding off any western intervention.

Pakistani Projects in Taleban Areas 'Complicate' Crisis

LD2501201496 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Pakistani delegation has visited Qandahar and Herat provinces. According to international news agencies, the Pakistani authorities have said that a delegation has been sent to Taleban-controlled Qandahar and Herat provinces to set up a number of projects in these provinces.

The report adds that the Pakistani experts will work on the improvement of the telecommunications system, reconstruction of highways, and revival of textile mills in Qandahar and Herat provinces. The report further adds that Pakistan is planning to open branches of its National Bank in Qandahar and Herat provinces.

According to another report, the Kabul administration's Foreign Ministry issued a statement yesterday and viewed this action of Pakistan's government — which took place without the consent of the Kabul administration — as an open violation of Afghanistan's territorial integrity and a blatant interference in its internal affairs.

Political observers believe that, excluding humanitarian assistance, the implementation of such projects by foreign countries in various regions of Afghanistan which are under the control of various local forces, before any representative government comes into being, will further complicate the crisis in Afghanistan and cause the fighting to continue.

Blockade of Kabul Causing 'New Tragedy' as Supplies Dwindle

LD2501210196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The coordinator for UN humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan has called for the opening of supply routes to Kabul. At a news conference today, Martin Barber, coordinator of the UN humanitarian assistance, said that food stocks and fuel in Kabul are running down and the supply routes have not yet been opened. Under these circumstances the United Nations cannot properly implement its urgent aid program, because stocks are running down. Mr. Barber warned that Kabul in this very cold winter is a new tragedy facing the world and this should not be ignored.

The supply routes from the west and south are being closed by the Taleban group and the Kabul-Jalalabad road has been blocked for the last 10 days by the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party, led by Golboddin Hekmatyar].

The UN representative said that a large number of Kabul citizens have insufficient foodstuffs, and the closure of supply routes, above all, has badly affected the civilian population.

According to Martin Barber, at the moment 160,000 people are benefiting from urgent humanitarian assistance in Kabul. The program is also assisting the workers in return for labor as well as nurseries, hospitals, and others.

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He asked for the supply routes to be opened and said the convoys should be allowed to arrive in Kabul. The price of foodstuffs and meat have gone up by 60 percent during the past 10 days.

According to another report, Dr. Najibollah Lafra'i, minister of state for foreign affairs, during his meeting with David Lockwood, head of the UNDP in Kabul, gave an assurance saying that the government has kept all roads open to convoys and there is no obstruction of any kind against the arrival of convoys. The opposition forces, however, are still insisting on besieging Kabul and have prevented the arrival of foodstuffs and fuel to Kabul.

Kabul Residents Urge Taleban To Lift Blockade

LD2501132096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1047 GMT 25 Jan 96

[By Yuriy Kozmin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI, January 25 (Itar-Tass) — A mass demonstration of civilians has taken place in Kabul, with the demonstrators urging Taleban leaders to lift the siege of the Afghan capital, said a report reaching here on Thursday from a source in the Kabul administration.

The demonstrators demanded that the Taleban leaders re-open to traffic all roads leading to Kabul. It was by those roads that humanitarian supplies had been previously delivered to the residents of the Afghan capital, according to the source.

At the same time the demonstrators urged the Pakistani authorities who, they say, give military support to the Taleban movement, to put pressure on Taleban leaders to make them withdraw from the city and cease artillery bombardments of residential blocks.

Only several U.N. motor convoys reached the Afghan capital in recent weeks to bring food and fuel to the Kabul residents, of whom there are now about 800,000, according to the latest data provided by the Afghan authorities.

Prior to the demonstration, the Taleban leaders as well as representatives of the forces led by 'Abdol Rashid Dostam and Golboddin Hekmatyar, who are in opposition to President Borhanoddin Rabbani, had rejected the Afghan President's proposal to agree on a ceasefire for the duration of Ramadan, the Moslem month of fasting. They emphasised that they intended to continue to press for removing the country's president from power militarily.

UN Should 'Pressure' Opposition To Open Afghan Supply Routes

LD2501211496 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Commentary by Bakhtar political observer]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Kabul-Jalalabad route has been closed for the last 10 days by the highwaymen of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party].

The supply route to the west through Maydan Shar and the road leading to the south through Lowgar Province have been closed by the Taleban group. [Words indistinct] Kabul-Jalalabad road is a major route for supplying Kabul with foodstuffs and fuel. On the basis of a discreet conspiracy, this route has been closed. Thisr situation has caused the prices to go up by 60 percent. A severe shortage of foodstuffs can be noticed in the open market. [Words indistinct]

Those people who with difficulty managed to travel along the road between Jalalabad and Kabul say that the highwaymen are preventing even small qualities of basic materials from reaching Kabul. This situation has made the UN representative announce that the country's capital faces a catastrophe and to say that the stocks of the humanitarian assistance will run out. [passage omitted]

The opposition forces, particularly in the holy fasting month of Ramadan and the coldest days of winter, have embarked on such an action which has endangered the lives of thousands of people in Kabul. The opposition forces insist on keeping the roads closed and thus they make robbery a means toward political objectives. Mr. Martin Barber's objections and warning will not be sufficient. The warning, though it informs the world's public, must also contain practical action. The highwaymen have links with Pakistan. The people in Kabul believe that Pakistan's government wants to exert heavy pressure on Kabul. Therefore, the United Nations by exerting pressure on Pakistan and by direct pressure on the Taleban group's leaders and on Golboddin Hekmatyar, should make them open the supply routes so that the catastrophe can be averted.

Afghanistan: Bulgarian Plane Forced to Land in Kazakhstan

LD2501154196 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Bulgarian plane carrying weapons and ammunition for the Kabul administration

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was forced to land in Kazakhstan. According to an Iranian radio report, two days ago a Bulgarian plane, carrying weapons and ammunition and bound for Bagram Airport, was forced to land by the Kazakhstan air force.

The Bulgarian Government (?protested) to the Government of Kazakhstan on the forcible landing of its plane.

Kabul Citizen Killed in Taleban Rocket Attack

LD2501172796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As a result of rocket attacks by Benazir Bhutto's Taleban, one citizen of Kabul was killed and another two were wounded. Bakhtar reports that the Taleban group, after a four-day pause, has resumed the firing of rockets on residential areas of Kabul city.

The Islamic State has declared a unilateral cease-fire on all fronts for the holy fasting month of Ramadan. However, the Taleban group, ignoring Islamic principles and human dignity, continue to kill the city's persecuted people.

Afghanistan: Lafra'i Receives Mestiri's Political Adviser

LD2501211996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Dr. Najibollah Lafra'i, minister of state for foreign affairs, met today in his office with Dr. Abu-Nafisa, senior political adviser to Mahmoud Mestiri, special envoy of the UN secretary general on Afghanistan. At this meeting talks were held on a broad range of mutual interested subjects.

India

Indian Prime Minister Rules Out Abandoning 'Nuclear Option'

BK2501125696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has declared that India will not give up its nuclear option. Mr. Narasimha Rao was addressing a convention of Congress-I workers at Nagarjuna Nagar in Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh today. He said Pakistan is acquiring arms and equipment and assured that the country is not lagging behind in anything. Mr. Rao said India is not for an arms race in the subcontinent, but in whatever manner we see we are not behind Pakistan.

Indian Envoy Stresses CTBT Link to Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

BK2501130196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has asserted that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] will be meaningful only if it is linked to elimination of all nuclear weapons in a time-bound framework. Speaking at the ongoing disarmament conference in Geneva, the Indian ambassador to the permanent mission, Mrs. Arundhati Ghosh, said India has demonstrated its commitment to nonproliferation by voluntarily exercising the most rigorous control on its peaceful nuclear program.

India's President Delivers Republic Day Address

BK2501150296 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1445 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Address to the nation by Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma on the eve of the 47th Republic Day; place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Fellow citizens, sisters, brothers, and dear children of India: Tomorrow our nation celebrates Republic Day. On this auspicious occasion, I have great pleasure in extending to you and the Indians beyond our shores my greetings and felicitations. My comrades in the struggle for freedom would remember that 26 January has special emotional significance as poorna swaraj [complete freedom] day. Under the leadership of Mahatama Gandhi, the declaration of poorna swaraj was a powerful expression of national resolve to attain complete freedom, independence, and self-governance. The historic importance of 26 January is heightened by the coming into force of the Constitution of India on this date 46 years ago. Our Constitution in essence represents our national philosophy. The Constitution voices the social, economic, and political covenant entered into by and for ourselves as equal citizens of our Republic. On Republic Day we celebrate the pluralism, oneness, synthesis, and harmony that are vital aspects of the very soul of India. Indeed, these are our nation's defining characteristics, without which India would not truly be India.

It is essential that all of us appreciate in full measure the determinant values of our nationhood. More than ever, we as a people need to comprehend what it is that makes our nation; what sustains us, empowers our progress, and gives to India a position of respect in the world as a whole.

Undoubtedly there is colossal power innate to democracy and pluralism; democratic pluralism oriented to achieve growth with social justice. We Indians must

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recognize this potential in ourselves as a people and be mindful of the conditions in which this nation-building energy can be manifested for the good of all. We must nurture an environment for growth in which every individual can rise to her or his full potential; an environment in which the natural genius of the people of India can find unhampered expression. We must constantly safeguard and strengthen the atmosphere of oneness and common endeavor that is of the essence in taking our great country forward. In the context of the present global geopolitical framework, it is crucially necessary that we have a clear understanding of our national interests.

Pluralism has been central to India's intellectual and spiritual heritage from ancient times. Respect for all religions and recognition of all religions as equally valid path to truth constitute a national tradition. Today, we must also appreciate that pluralism is an indispensable prerequisite for national unity, and thus an essential prerequisite for national security and meaningful progress. Communalism and narrow thinking, therefore, directly jeopardize national security. There should be wider recognition of this fact. This assumes greater importance now as the general security environment warrants a high level of vigilance and preparedness. Indeed, communalism, casteism, corruption, and criminalization are evils which we must resolutely overcome. Increasingly it is evident that these contaminants are interconnected and are operating in tandem. The more deep-seated and unyielding these evils appear, the more necessary it is that the power of the people be mobilized to expose and stamp them out. It is in the national interest to do so. These problems are neither endemic nor insoluble.

A radical positive change can certainly be effected provided concerted steps are initiated by public-spirited citizens, the press, the judiciary, and the executive authority. A key element in such a movement for a cleaner public life would be the need for persons in prominent public offices to be in the forefront in setting a salutary example of rectitude and of high standard of personal conduct and accountability. A clear and unwavering moral and ethical commitment to the securing of true progress is a basic requirement for our advancing in the right direction.

Let us recall these words of the father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi. I quote: Economic progress should be harmoniously coordinated with real progress; by economic progress, I mean material advancement, and by real progress is implied ethical rejuvenation, unquote. Such an approach is all the more necessary as we endeavor to build the wherewithal of a competitive economy capable of securing our rightful position of eminence. We have to do this facing the visible and the hidden challenges of the global economic order, structured and managed at present mainly by the developed nations.

In the economic sphere, we have witnessed significant growth of our GNP and agricultural as well as industrial production. However, the task of ushering prosperity at all levels is of stupendous magnitude. As we go ahead with our programs for restructuring the economy, we have to be careful to ensure that our policies bring direct benefits to the poorest and the weakest. Development generates its own pressures. We have to devise and adjust mechanisms and processes to secure aggregate equities in the use of our national resources and in the patterns of growth.

In this, we have a invaluable advantage in terms of the viable democratic institutions and processes developed from the panchayats [rural bodies] to the federal level. Experience has borne out the value of democratic decentralization of power. We can take justifiable pride in our having constituted panchayats and local bodies in the rural and urban areas across the length and breadth of the country. Panchayati raj [village level administration system] has potential for building a modern and progressive India in harmony with the felt needs and aspirations of the people. The level of commitment, zeal, efficiency, and integrity of those working in these institutions will be crucial to their success — success in realizing the dream of the father of our nation. It is vital that all the organs and mechanisms of our democratic polity function effectively in an atmosphere of mutual trust, willingness to share, and perception of common interest in each other's progress. Such a climate of creative cooperation is a great value at all levels.

In our federal polity, the needs of equitable use of resources and balanced growth are reflected in the interactions between the central government and the states and as between different states. The basic object should be to build a strong center for strong states. We have much to be proud of and to gain by resolving complex issues in the spirit of mutual accommodation. Let us remember the dictum: We must be strong and principled to realize our full potential. The great prospects and challenges ahead call for a resolute effort by all — the kisan [peasant], the jawan [soldier], and the mazdoor [laborer], of whom we are very proud, and indeed by one and all. The women of India, particularly, must attain their due position as equal partners in every sector of nation building activity.

Fellow citizens, in our parliamentary democracy, a major process to be undergone before long would be the elections to the Lok Sabha. Ours is the world's largest

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democracy. Elections are the life breath of our system. Every care has to be taken to ensure that elections are free and fair and that the verdict of the people finds due and full expression. That is a sacred trust and responsibility which all of us as citizens share. The nation expects every entity and mechanism in our polity to perform respective designated roles harmoniously and with perfect constitutional propriety.

Friends, the message of India to our neighborhood and to the rest of the world has been and will be of peace, friendship, and cooperation. The following verse expresses India's commitment from time immemorial to universal good: May all secure happiness, may all enjoy good health, may all experience goodness around them. Let none be in pain or sorrow. Such has been India's outlook from our ancient past to the present day. We shall continue to play a vigilant and creative role in world affairs for the good of all humankind.

Tomorrow on our Republic day, when we unfurl the national tricolor, let us salute our flag of freedom. Let us remember the heroic sacrifices of the martyrs and freedom fighters and rededicate ourselves to our motherland.

Sisters and brothers, may reason guide us and may every citizen be a light unto himself and a friend to his neighbor. So may India be glorious.

Jai Hind [Hail India]!

India: Rocket Seized, Explosion Reported on Republic Day

BK2601093996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The nation celebrates the 47th Republic Day today with a grand ceremonial parade by the armed forces in the capital this morning. The president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, took the salute of the parade commanded by the GOC [General Officer Commanding], Delhi area, Major General H.R.S. Mann. The Brazilian President, Mr. Fernando Cardoso, who is on a four-day visit, was the chief guest at the celebrations. [passage omitted]

In Srinagar, alert security forces foiled an attempt by militants to disrupt the Republic Day function. PTI reports that a rocket was seized from a nearby hospital minutes before the parade. Some arrests have been made in this connection. The celebrations, however, continued uninterrupted with the governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, unfurling the national flag.

In Jaipur, the Republic Day celebrations were delayed for some time following an explosion at a stadium where the governor was to inaugurate the parade. Our correspondent reports that no one was injured in the blast which damaged a portion of the wall. The function passed off peacefully. [passage omitted]

India: 'Hawala Scandal,' Resignations in Parties Viewed

BK2501131896 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 24 Jan 96 p 11

[Editorial: "The Cupboard Stinks"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Only the incorrigibly naive would believe that the cupboard of Indian politics, like that of Mother Hubbard, is bare. However, few would have thought that it is full of decayed corpses tumbling out in quick succession as has been happening in the wake of the Supreme Court's order on the hawala [illegal money transfer] scandal. The first casualties were the unlikely BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] chief and three Union Ministers, chargesheeted by the Central Bureau of Investigation. There were other big names — ex-ministers, present governors and the like — with powerful bureaucrats bringing up the rear of this dismal parade. On Monday, the hawala scandal claimed the scalp of another Union Minister, when Mr Rajesh Pilot confessed to receiving hawala money and offering to resign from the government. Mr Sharad Yadav of the Janata Dal said he would quit the Lok Sabha as he too had received money from the Jains ostensibly for fighting elections. The BJP, continuing its ambivalence, decided to sacrifice Mr Yashwant Sinha's Bihar Assembly membership and asked Delhi Chief Minister Madan Lal Khurana to continue sitting in his rocky chair.

Tuesday saw the explosion of what sounded like the ultimate hawala bombshell. Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee sought to substantiate his allegation of the past two days that among those who received money from the Jains was no less a person than Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao himself. The BJP leader said that his allegation was based on a statement made by Mr S.K. Jain, the prime accused in the hawala case, and recorded by the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] and the amount involved was more than Rs 3 crore.

An allegation is just that and nothing more. It cannot be taken as proof of anyone's guilt. Since the CBI seems to attach a lot of credibility to the Jain diaries, Mr Vajpayee's charge raises an important question as to whether the CBI does indeed possess the recording of Mr S.K. Jain's statement. And if so, has it informed the Supreme Court about it? Going beyond that, does the CBI see itself as an agency obliged to find the truth and let the country now about it or does it confine itself to the role of being the hatchet to the Prime Minister

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releasing selective details of its findings? The CBI now has no option but to inform the Supreme Court about the existence or otherwise of the recording of Mr S.K. Jain's statement. If it has any hesitation, it should recall the Supreme Court's assurance that the court would clear any impediments it might face in this regard.

Perhaps Mr Narasimha Rao should recall his own statement of a few days ago that the law would take its own course. Not merely for others but also for the Prime Minister. It is clearly premature to slap the label of guilt on anyone accused of receiving funds from agents allegedly involved in hawala transactions. Mr Vajpayee is quite unfair in demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister while his party would not let Mr Khurana resign. But undeniably, the legitimacy of both the regimes, one ruling Delhi and the other the whole country, has been greatly diminished. What is sauce for the Advani-Arjun Singh-Jakhar geese must be sauce for the Narasimha Rao-Khurana ganders.

Indian Congress Committee Backs Prime Minister in Money Scandal

BK2501132396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Executive Committee of the Congress-I Parliamentary Party says it stands firmly by the prime minister and will oppose all attempts to malign him. In a resolution adopted in the Executive Committee meeting in New Delhi today, members criticized the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, for making what they called false and baseless allegations against Mr. Narasimha Rao in the Jain hawala [illegal money transfer] case.

Indian External Affairs Minister Meets With Brazilian President

BK2501133196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Brazil have agreed to expand their cooperation in several fields, including trade, telecommunications, and energy. Possibilities of strengthening bilateral ties in political and other areas were also considered when the external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, called on President Cardoso of Brazil in New Delhi. President Cardoso favored instituting chairs on Indian and Brazilian studies in both the countries. Mr. Mukherjee told the Brazilian president that his visit, especially as the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations, will give a great impetus to bilateral relations.

Iran

Iran: 5 More Ayatollah Sheybani Followers Said Arrested

NC2601072096 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1500 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports indicate that in recent weeks, five more followers of Ayatollah Sheybani have been arrested. This is in addition to the 88 people who were arrested in late fall.

Amnesty International, which is based in London, has expressed concern that the arrested people will be subjected to tortures.

Ayatollah Sheybani has criticized the regime's political and religious policies, hence the arrest of his followers.

Musavian Denies BND Allegations on Iran's Nuclear Activities

LD2501173996 Tehran IRNA in English 1719 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bonn, Jan. 25, IRNA — Iranian ambassador to Bonn, Hoseyn Musavian said here on Thursday [25 January] that he has lodged a protest with the German vice-chancellor, Bernhard Schmidbauer, against the allegation by head of Germany's intelligence service (BND), Konrad Porzner that Iran was buying nuclear materials.

According to Musavian, smugglers of nuclear materials might make such allegations, but, for the German intelligence agency to accept such claims, speaks of "naivety" and is "unacceptable".

Musavian said Iran has already voiced readiness to cooperate with Germany against proliferation of nuclear arms in the region and the world. He said if there exists any doubt in this regard, it would be removed through Tehran-Bonn joint cooperation in this respect.

"We believe that through cooperation with Iran on this issue, the falsity of such claims would become clear to Germany."

Iran: Emami-Kashani on Elections, Continued U.S. 'Enmity'

LD2601105396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0802 GMT 26 Jan 96

[Friday prayers sermon by Ayatollah Mohammad Emami-Kashani, a member of the Guardian Council, at Tehran University — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted] We

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are approaching the 12th Bahman [1 February], the anniversary of our great Imam's [Khomeyni's] return from exile; may God be satisfied with his deeds. The occasion revives the memory of those glorious days and the enthusiastic welcome given to the Imam by the noble nation of Iran. Celebrating the anniversary will demonstrate the unity and vigilance of the nation. Without the vigilance of our nation, the epic-making and zealous youth, and the selfless mothers, fathers, and wives, we would not have witnessed the flag of Islam being hoisted in the world today. [passage omitted]

The great Iranian nation has always demonstrated its unity. It will do the same again, God willing. The upcoming important occasion are the Majles elections. The Islamic Majles is one of the pillars of this system. Paying attention to the Majles is a top priority. The Imam used to attach so much importance to the Majles. The people should also demonstrate the degree of importance they attach to the Majles by taking part in the elections. The nation should realize that their mass participation will bring despondency to the enemy. [shouts of approval from the congregation]

If our people were not so aware and vigilant, then the world would never have allowed Iran to reach its present status. Many circles thought about doing things against us, but they regretted it either right at the start of their plan, or half-way through, or even right at the end. [sentence as heard] This was because they realized that this vigilant nation is always present on the scenes and that they cannot confront Iran with their ploys.

The hostility toward Iran, however, lingered in two countries — that is America and Israel — both of which still continue their enmity. They do so because of clear reasons. America's reason is that it says I am the one and the only arrogant power. [passage omitted] When you fall into the darkness of the seas, not only are you totally blinded but you also lose the ability to use your hands and touch things.

America is constantly taking action against Iran and is constantly suffering defeat and disgrace. God Willing, one day it will get tired and give up.

So, this was the reason for America's attitude. Now to Israel. It is of course true that Israel is an illegal entity, which in turn considers the Islamic Republic of Iran an illegal entity and as a cancerous cell in the region. It is therefore only natural that it should be our enemy.

The hostility of America, by the way, is not only because of its arrogant and dictatorial nature. It is also because it sees that Islam is developing and spreading everywhere. When Islam spreads, then — like it or not — the wrong ideas of arrogance will naturally begin a process of erosion. This is the reason for their behavior toward us.

However, they are wrong in thinking that if they deal with the starting point of the movement [Iran], then the entire movement will collapse the world over. They must know that this movement was started by the eminent prophet, the Koran, and holy Imams. It has nothing to do with Imam Khomeyni, may he be admitted to paradise. [crowd salutes Mohammad and his scion] [passage omitted]

The Guardian Council supervises matters on a level that has nothing to do with who's who, where he's from, and which group or individual he represents. That is not discussed at the Guardian Council. The Guardian Council does not concern itself with the people's [the candidates'] eligibility. Neither does it concern itself with the election procedure, whether it is carried out correctly or not. It concerns itself with whether there have been any violations, whether those violations have disrupted the election procedure. That is the point. It means the Guardian Council considers the law. Under the law the people put forward their candidates, in accordance with criteria laid down by law of course. One of the criteria is practical adherence to Islam. Obviously one who does not adhere to Islam could not be a representative [of the parliament] in an Islamic revolution.

He [the candidate] should also be loyal to the Islamic Republic and the Supreme Jurisconsult. He should declare his loyalty. He should demonstrate his loyalty. It is not a matter of qualifications. If the media have mistakenly said it is about qualifications or if the people have misunderstood that it is to do with qualifications, it is not so. Eligibility should be inherent. He [the candidate] should demonstrate his loyalty. The Guardian Council looks into it without any bias. It only considers the law. Therefore, everyone should take part.

Of course, our people are alert and aware and will elect a strong Majles while we are in very sensitive and difficult conditions, while we are standing against the world of arrogance, while they are trying to find fault in us everywhere. They said so much about the country's budget. The country's budget has been prepared so beautifully and is being reviewed at the Guardian Council. We have a strong, authoritative, wise, just, and knowledgeable president. A person who is familiar with politics. He is a statesman and a politician who manages the country. The budget is also being reviewed at the Guardian Council. The enemies have said so much that they have worn themselves out. [passage omitted]

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Iranian Deputy Details Defense Measures Against 'U.S. Plot'

NC2501221196 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 11 Jan 96 p 2

[From the Political Desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] A member of the Majles Defense Committee has explained Iran's plans and measures for combating the recent U.S. plot.

According to our parliamentary correspondent Mah Hasanbegi, a member of the Majles Defense Committee said: In this regard, the defense committee held a number of sessions on funding the needs of the armed forces units. Despite some rial shortages, the funds to provide for ensuring the needs of these forces were placed at their disposal.

The member of the Majles Defense Committee elaborated: In view of the recent U.S. plots for subversive activities in Iran, our borders have been divided among the various armed forces' units.

Hasanbegi announced: The protection our Western and northwestern frontiers was assigned to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps; and the southern and southeastern borders have been placed under the protection of the Armed Forces, while our maritime borders will be guarded by our naval forces.

Hasanbegi, who is also Damghan's deputy in the Islamic Majles, stressed: In view of the military and security measures being taken all along our country's borders, all kinds of infiltration and traffic by the counterrevolutionary forces into Iran has been prevented.

He continued: The Basij forces, plus millions of Iranians, will ruthlessly quell any moves by the enemies of the revolution within the country. The people of Damghan have expressed their willingness to contribute 10 billion rials to combat the latest U.S. plot.

The member of the Majles Defense Committee added: In view of the fact that the United States has recently called on some neighboring countries to provide a base or a site for its forces, naturally our plans should also be adjusted from what they were in the past. The necessary decisions have been made in this regard.

He referred to the measures decreed by the great leader, in the light of which officials throughout the country have initiated serious steps to combat the recent U.S. plot. He said: The nation as well as the Armed Forces should remain prepared and vigilant in the face of the plots by the powers of world arrogance spearheaded by the United States so that they will not be harmed.

In conclusion he reminded us that the Muslim revolutionary people of Iran will give a teeth-shattering blow to the United States as usual despite the plots by the powers of world arrogance.

Tehran Hezbollah Condemns U.S. 'Moves' Against Iran

NC2401193596 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 10 Jan 96 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement condemning the recent U.S. moves against the Islamic Republic of Iran and pledging obedience to the decrees of the great leader, the Tehran Hezbollah expressed its readiness to combat the powers of world arrogance and the criminal United States.

Its statement said: "Once again the call of Abraham has resounded. The false mark of divinity that the criminal United States has etched on its forehead and the arrogant Western power's thoughtless and foolish approval of a budget to combat the hallowed system of the Islamic Republic of Iran have exposed the repulsive visage of the prurient United States, the mother of all vices of the century in the eyes of the world."

Everyone should know the despicability of the American Administration has reached such a level that it has brazenly embarked on the most hideous and reprehensible action in international relations against a free and powerful government.

The disciple of the 'Ashura ideology, the flag-bearer of the path of Husayn, his eminence the grand Ayatollah Khamene'i (may his shadow continue), said: The combatant and mature nation of Iran has weathered the battlefields, is strong, and knows its military prowess. It knows how to confront the world of tyranny and arrogance. Hence if the United States were to take any step against such a nation, the people would crush its face with a firm blow. Islamic Iran would never permit such abhorrent and feeble-minded actions by the United States to be forgotten.

Hezbollah proclaims to the world that in the battle against infidels, especially the criminal United States, it will remain steadfast to the end, as it did in the eight years of holy defense [in the Iran-Iraq war]. It will rub the nose of the criminal United States—the pioneer of government-sponsored terrorism that spearheads the system of hegemony—in the dust of degradation. (Glory be to God, his messenger, and the faithful) [preceding sentence in Arabic].

[Signed] The Hezbollah of Tehran

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Iranian Commentary: U.S. Against Good Relations Among Gulf States

LD2501130696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Saudi Defense Minister Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz has told the MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC DIGEST daily on 24 January that his government seeks the best possible ties with Iran.

The stance of Riyadh concerning its ties with Tehran, which is announced following the coming to power of Prince 'Abdallah on the first of January, has been considered unprecedented in its kind. Earlier the informed political sources predicted that with the coming to power of Amir 'Abdallah some changes will occur in the Saudi foreign policies, especially tendency to have close cooperation with the regional states. Such a posturing by the Saudi defense minister is in line with the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to subside tensions and extend regional cooperation.

In this regard Tehran has always considered the best way for the establishment of real security in the sensitive Persian Gulf region to be the establishment of brotherly ties among the regional states and removal of differences and suspicions. Such differences, which are always exaggerated or created by the alien powers in mass media affiliated to them, have become an excuse for their presence in the region. Whereas cooperation among the Persian Gulf regional states, in their providing stability and tranquillity, not only questions their continued presence in the region but will also cause a recession in the sale of arms by such countries as the US, Britain and France to the regional countries. Therefore close ties and cooperation among the governments situated on the two sides of the Persian Gulf is by no means favored by the aliens, especially the United States.

As the Saudi defense minister has said, Iran and Saudi Arabia are two large Muslims countries in the region and friendly ties between these two governments will entail many interests for the region and the two countries.

Experts believe that these two strategic countries enjoy many grounds and capacity for political, economic and cultural cooperation. The Islamic Republic of Iran has in the meantime practically proved that it is prepared to cooperate with the governments located in southern Persian Gulf, including Saudi Arabia. Overlooking these government's aids to the Iraqi regime during the latter's eight-year long aggression against Iran, as well as condemnation of the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, are clear examples.

At the same time in view of the good intention of the Islamic Republic of Iran, observers believe that the practical measure by the Saudi Government aimed at extending ties with Iran will undoubtedly be followed by the positive reaction of Tehran officials.

Iranian Newspaper Reports on Bahrain Government Ban on Meetings

NC2501151096 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 15 Jan 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the recent unrest in Bahrain, the Bahraini authorities warned the Muslims in the country not to use the mosques for ulterior objectives.

AFP, reporting from Manama, stated that the leader of the dissidents in Bahrain, Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri was summoned to the Interior Ministry and warned that the use of mosques or religious demonstrations to harm the country's security or to incite arson is prohibited.

According to an official of the Bahraini Interior Ministry, he was summoned after a series of disturbances and cases of arson throughout Bahrain.

In the past two weeks, the police have clashed with worshipers after the conclusion of the Friday prayers. Some people were injured in these clashes.

Iran: Efforts To 'Externalize' Bahrain's Problems Discussed

NC2501125796 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 22 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Externalizing Domestic Problems Not Solution to Crisis in Bahrain"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bahrain has been facing an unprecedented unrest since December 1994 when police arrested a Muslim cleric who demanded the restoration of Parliament which was suspended in 1975.

Historically a province of Iran, Bahrain became British Protectorate state in the 19th century. It became independent in May 1970 when Iran accepted the findings of a report commissioned by the UN, which showed that the inhabitants of Bahrain favored complete independence. But practically it has been subservient to London and Washington since its independence.

The first ever Bahraini constituent assembly was convened in December 1972 which produced a constitution providing for a National Assembly, containing Cabinet ministers and 30 elected members. Although on December 7 1975, elections were held for the new assembly

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and (in the absence of political parties) individual candidates entered the assembly, the Amir dissolved it in August of the same year.

With no signs that national assembly would be reconvened, Bahraini citizens have, over the past few months, demanded the restoration of the Parliament. In the absence of political parties, pressure groups and an organized opposition people had to hold fast to unrest to convince the officials to restore the Parliament. Instead of redressing the people's grievances, the officials resorted to arrests and suppression.

The unrest has mounted up since the Muslim clerics, demanding restoration of the Parliament, were arrested 13 months ago.

Subservient to the big powers, the Bahraini officials did not heed the people's genuine demands. As a result, the situation has deteriorated.

It is an old ploy to externalize domestic problems by officials who are not ready to submit to the genuine demands of the citizens. The Bahraini officials should bear in mind that they cannot remain indifferent to the genuine demands of their people. The world has changed. Communism has evaporated, the Berlin Wall has collapsed, and new waves of change blow across the world today. If Bahraini officials close their eyes to these changes, their political system will remain an anachronistic one with inherent unsurmountable problems.

Of course, the Bahraini citizens should not forget that arson and unrest is not the best means to restore parliamentary system in their country. Negotiation and other peaceful means will definitely guarantee the restoration of Bahraini people's rights. The Bahraini officials should not forget this because an iron hand response to people's genuine demands will deal a catastrophic blow to the whole nation.

Tehran on Protest March in Kabul, Iran's Peace Efforts

NC2501105896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Several thousand disabled victims of Afghanistan's wars organized a march to protest the silence and procrastination by international forums over the Afghan crisis and to protest the continuing war and blockade of Kabul. After shouting various slogans to protest foreign intervention in Afghanistan, demonstrators gathered in front of the UN office in Kabul and demanded serious steps toward peace and toward ending the opposition's blockade of Kabul.

The marchers, who were concerned about the continuing three-year war among rival groups, stated that the oppressed people can no longer compensate for the war and the bloodshed and demanded that the war among the conflicting groups be stopped so that the people face lesser calamities.

The rapid military developments in Afghanistan, especially the recent conflict between the opposition and government forces around Kabul, as well as continuing efforts by the antigovernment forces to cut off the Afghan capital have paved the way for major developments, especially in relations involving the opposition Coordination Council and Borhanoddin Rabbani's government.

The rise in the power of the Afghan Government, Rabbani's announcement of readiness to talk with the opposition, and the strengthening of the peaceseeking trend among opposition forces led to political efforts to end the dire situation of the long-suffering Afghan people. The government also recently proposed a ceasefire during Ramadan, which has had an encouraging impact on the peace process in Afghanistan.

But a statement by two major opposition groups disagreeing with Rabbani's cease-fire proposal has again given the Kabul people cause for concern that more battles will start in the city. Yesterday's march by the war-disabled in Kabul to protest the continuing war and the blockade of the capital is a clear example of this concern.

Three years of bloody civil war is an experience the various political groups in Afghanistan can use as a basis for their analyses in choosing the most logical path that the people of Afghanistan should tread. The time has come for the Afghan leaders to seek their true position and to concentrate on fulfilling the objectives of their jihad, which was started with their victorious struggles against the interfering foreign forces. The Islamic Republic's persistent efforts for peace in Afghanistan can have a positive and significant impact on accelerating the talks among the various groups and can strengthen the determination of the leaders of the warring groups for more serious talks. These efforts have created the golden opportunity of solving the tragedy in Afghanistan without foreign intervention.

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Iran: Afghan Factions Urged To Form National Government

LD2401141696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 24 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Pakistani state television announced on Tuesday January 23 that Pakistan had sent delegations to the Afghan provinces of Kandahar and Herat. The trip is aimed at implementing projects on highway repairs, telecommunications system improvement, and setting up of a national bank and a department store in the two province.

The official announcement of the news came when the Pakistani Government earlier reacted sharply to the unofficial news. Kabul calls illegal Islamabad's measures in the west and southern regions of the country, describing it a violation of the territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Nevertheless, it seems that Pakistan is quite determined to find a way to the Central Asian region through the western parts of Afghanistan.

Observers believe that the dispatch of the Pakistani delegations to Herat and Kandahar Provinces has been made in the same connection. Observers say that although the Pakistani measure is aimed at crating economic links with the Central Asian countries, similar acts by the arrogant powers is a matter of concern. In this regard, one can take into consideration that each part of Afghanistan is controlled by various Afghan mojahedin factions who sometimes forget their national interests. One can mention the trip of one of the leaders of the Afghan mojahedin in the north, to London, and his holding of dialogues with British companies for the exploitation of gas in his area.

Afghan affairs experts say such measures by the Afghan leaders endangers the territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Based on this various Afghan factions should try and form a single and powerful government, instead of making efforts to stabilize their own positions.

Experts hold the view that, acting contrary to the formation of a national government, not only damages the interests of the country but will endanger the whole region.

Iran: Chernomyrdin's, Russia's Policies on Chechnya Assailed

NC2301205996 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 14 Jan 96 p 12

[Commentary by Ruzbeh Buolhari: "Achilles' Heel"]

[FBIS Translated Text] When Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin embarked on talks to find a political solution to the Chechen crisis with Shamil Basayev, who, together with a Chechen group, caused a hostage crisis last June, he thought he had taken a big step toward power.

Shots on television of his determined face as he tried to peacefully resolve the crisis and his efforts to talk with Dzhokhar Dudayev won him points against his cabinet's poor economic record.

But he and Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who issued the order to attack the Chechen Republic, never thought they were creating an "Achilles' heel." The crisis in Kizliar after battles flared in Chechnya, coinciding with the 17 December parliamentary elections in Russia, clearly proved that the bloody Chechnya case cannot be closed by force, by decrees, by assigning individuals, or by dispatching Russian soldiers. While the Russian statesmen gained the support of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the leader of the liberal- democrat party, they faced protests from the larger portion of society that is fed up seeing Stalinist policies repeated.

The experience of the past several weeks in Moscow and Chechnya shows that despite the bloody price Russia has paid in confronting the Chechen separatists—a confrontation supported by some factions in the West—it is also hostage to the ambitions and mistakes of its leaders. As a hostage, it has suffered hardship and problems during the past five years.

While the incidents in Chechnya and the Kizliar crisis took place around the time of the parliamentary elections, the vote could have turned out differently, reducing the popularity of Chernomyrdin and Zhirinovskiy and adding to the popularity of the communists and their allies.

Chernomyrdin and Yeltsin cannot be lucky all the time. The continuation of bloody policies that seek to ensure Russia's rights can harm them and benefit their opponents, particularly the communists.

Iran: 'Decisive Approach' Needed Toward Serb War Criminals

LD2401224996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 24 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Head of The Hague International Court of Justice, Richard Godlstone, who had arrived in Sarajevo [on] Monday January 22, discussed the issue of mass graves, holding innocent Muslim bodies, and Serb war criminals, with Bosnian officials and NATO commanders on Tuesday January 23. Meanwhile U.S. assistant Secretary of State, John Shadegg, who is

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currently in Bosnia after observing mass graves in Srebrenica at first hand, has no option but to confirm the occurrence of such a gruesome incident, that is the massacre of the Muslims at the hand of the Serbs.

The widescale massacre of the Muslims by Bosnian Serb criminals was once described as an overblown event by political and news circles. But now that clashes have come to an end and mass graves containing innocent Muslim bodies have been discovered, the extensive range of Serbs' horrifying atrocities has been unveiled too; an issue which sparked off hatred toward Serbs' inhumane measures among the world public opinion. For this very reason officials from the international court at The Hague, along with envoys from Washington, have been dispatched to the war-stricken Bosnian Republic to glean first-hand evidence of the lurid events. It should be stressed, however, that the mass graves inspected by John Shadegg are merely an example of the wartime legacy and Serbs' atrocities. In order to wipe out any trace of their inhumane measures, Serb forces interred the corpses deep inside the earth and poured acid over them where they hindered any factfinding team from getting near sites where innocent bodies were buried. Elsewhere NATO commander had earlier announced any cooperation in unearthing mass graves holding Muslim bodies is not at all included in NATO's mandate.

Political observers maintain NATO's forces willingness to cooperate with fact-finding teams in Bosnia is not tantamount to their cooperation to establish justice there. Therefore NATO troops merely under specific circumstances and in order to be immune from attacks launched by the world public opinion have no alternative but to express cooperation in this regard. This comes at a time when atrocities were carried out under the very nose of NATO troops when they were more or less under UN peacekeeping forces command in Bosnia. At any rate UN circles' negligence in taking decisive measures in the face of war criminals and their failure to report atrocities perpetrated by the Serbs in Bosnia, pose a great threat to the entire humanity. Hence a decisive approach toward the perpetrators while establishing justice in the Balkans could somehow check occurrence of similar incidents and crises throughout the world.

Iranian Commentary Views New Round of Syrian-Israeli Talks

LD2501132696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1104 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The new round of talks between Syria and the Zionist regime began yesterday and are continuing. The military, economic, and water resources experts from both sides are attending the talks. The withdrawal of Zionist forces from the Golan Heights; security arrangements for the region and ways of utilizing Golan's water resources are among the most important issues to be discussed by the two sides.

The Zionist regime is procrastinating over its withdrawal from the Golan region in spite of the fact that it has accepted that that region is under occupation. By putting forward its own security plans, the Zionist regime is trying to preserve its control over the Golan even after it withdraws its forces. In addition, Tel Aviv is trying find a way of exploiting the Golan's water resources after withdrawing from that region. [passage omitted]

Syria considers the Golan Heights as an inseparable part of itself part and is calling for the unconditional, complete, and immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces. Damascus opposes any plan that may, in any way, limit or undermine its sovereignty over the Golan. In this context, it has so far opposed the plans proposed by Israel which call for the installation of rapid warning systems on the Golan and withdrawal of military forces from that region and its districts.

Israel is trying to get the concessions it wants while it is in control of the Golan. This is why it emphasizes on the future deployment of its forces and installations and on how to make use of the water resources and facilities. Syria, on its part, is trying to get those regions back before the future of troop deployment and water exploitation of the Golan becomes clear.

Syrian authorities consider that if the future situation of the Golan is determined before it is returned to Syria, this would tantamount to the violation of Syria's sovereignty and full control over a region which is really a part of that country.

In this respect, they emphasize that the Golan should be returned to Syria before any other steps are taken.

Taking note of the gap in the viewpoints of the two sides with regard to the Golan and its future, political commentators have said that not even will this new round of talks between Damascus and Tel- Aviv succeed in achieving any outstanding results. Although America and Israel are in a hurry to see that an agreement is arrived at, Syria, nevertheless, is trying — cautiously and with far-sightedness — to avoid the laying of a foundation that will place her in difficulties later on.

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Iran: Editorial Views Ways To Save Iraqis From 'Plots'

NC2501125996 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 21 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Save Iraqis From Starvation and Plots"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It is almost five years now since the enforcement of the UN economic sanctions against Iraq. Such sanctions were aimed at controlling the Iraqi government's revenues and limiting the funds previously spent on military purchases adding to the Iraqi arsenal.

The present situation is exerting heavy pressure on the Iraqi government. But, the Iraqi masses are also suffering at the same time. The ban on the import of essential commodities, the shutdown of factories and government bureaus, the transfer of the remaining Iraqi national assets abroad, and the layoff of a considerable part of the country's workforce have all contributed to unemployment, poverty, illness, and famine in Iraq.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced in a report early last fall that 70 percent of the Iraqi people cannot afford to buy sufficient foodstuff, and that some 29 percent of the Iraqi children are suffering from malnutrition.

Now, the question is that how long the Iraqi people should pay for Saddam's policies. It is true that the Iraqi men have committed an unforgivable sin by putting up with Saddam's selfish policies, but why should the women and children bear the brunt of the sin their fathers or their brothers committed. The Iraqi women and children have so far tolerated that harshness of homelessness and several other atrocities.

Although the world believes that any humanitarian aid to Saddam would go to his personal purse and be spent on the 50,000 Ba'th Party members, why should the philanthropic organizations refrain from extending their help to innocent women, children and the aged?

Indeed, the presence of the Red Crescent Society's aid workers in Iraq facilitates the distribution of humanitarian aid in that country.

What adds to the agony of man is that unfortunately some of the intelligent services of certain countries have infiltrated into the humanitarian organizations and carry out spying missions in the garb of humanitarian activities in Iraq.

However, the oppressed Iraqi people, reeling under the harsh winter, need to make both ends meet in order to survive.

On the eve of the holy month of Ramadan it is the duty of every Muslim to spare no effort to assist the starving Iraqi people before they are perished before the cruel clutches of death and before the enemy hatches new conspiracies in the name of extending humanitarian assistance to them.

Iranian Envoy to Iraqi Kurdistan on Outcome of Visit

NC2601073796 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 21 Jan 96 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Iraqi affairs, 'Ali Aqa Mohammadi, back from his eight-day trip to the Iraqi Kurdistan, elaborated on different aspects of Iran's efforts to help find' out a solution to the problems of the Iraqi nation.

Talking to the TEHRAN TIMES on the outcome of his recent trip, Aqa Mohammadi said, "We had detailed dialogs with heads of the warring Iraqi parties in northern Iraq during this trip. We discussed the remaining points of the Tehran Treaty with the concerned parties. New solutions were found to the problems existing between the two major groups involved in the conflict.

The major points of disagreement are now clear. They should be included in the agenda of the future talks, he said.

Aqa Mohammadi, the main coordinator of Iraqi affairs for the past five years, added, "An important outcome of the trip, to everyone's surprise, was that the Iraqi people grasped the opportunity to declare their strong political determination for a comprehensive peace in their country. Hence any move against peace from any circle is doomed to fail."

The Iranian delegation succeeded in building confidence between different warring factions, he said, adding, this helped us break the existing deadlock in the peace talks.

On the threats to the talks at this stage, Aqa Mohammadi said, "I am quite optimistic about the future of the talks. If others, including the Americans, do not sabotage the talks, the Kurdish warring factions may reach a peace deal in the near future.

Asked if Iran would increase its humanitarian aids to the people of northern Iraq, he said, "Keeping in mind such factors as severeness of the cold season, shortage of fuel for vehicles and heating, the high rate of unemployment and drastic shortage of food stuff and medicine, the condition of life is deteriorating for the inhabitants of

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northern Iraq. Hence it is necessary to take measures to settle those problems," said Aqa Mohammadi.

On whether the Iraqi Kurds consider Iran as a saviour he said, "People are well aware that from the very beginning, whenever they faced any problem, the Islamic Republic of Iran mobilized all possible facilities to solve their problem."

For instance when the U.S. attacked Iraq all our citizens along the borders were mobilized to accommodate Iraqi refugees. When Halabja was chemically bombarded, Iran treated the Iraqi victims as its citizens. Throughout the fratricidal war between the two warring parties over the past 15 months people have witnessed Iran's good will for stopping the bloodshed. This is why throughout our trip, people grasped every opportunity to reflect their gratitude.

"Meanwhile, every one knows that the only lasting peace agreement so far signed between the warring factions is the treaty signed in Tehran. So it is no surprise that they look at Iran as their saviour.

If I sum up the outcome of my observation in my visit to the Iraqi Kurdistan, I should say the Iraqi Kurds want peace. It is not impossible to bring about peace there if there is no sabotage."

Iranian Council Member Denies Rafsanjani Cut Ties With JRM

LD2401115096 Tehran IRNA in English 0710 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 24, IRNA — Rumors indicating that President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani had cut his ties with Jame'eh-ye Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez [Militant Clergy Association] (JRM) have been strongly denied by a leading member of the JRM Central Council, reported the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' Wednesday [24 January].

The member speaking on the condition of anonymity added that Iran's president is still very much associated with JRM and attends all its meetings.

"Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani is with the JRM and has not the least idea of leaving the organization, of which he is a founder," the paper added.

Both the president and Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani are regularly attending the JRM meetings and offering their advice to the Central Council, he said.

Nateq-Nuri Denies Signing Majles Deputies' Protest Letter

LD2401101696 Tehran IRNA in English 0755 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 24, IRNA — Majles speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said here Tuesday [23 January] that he was not among those deputies who signed a letter objecting to the statement issued by a group of 16 Iranian executive officials (khedmatgozaran-e sazandegi).

This came following a letter of protest signed reportedly by 150 Majles deputies on Monday, claiming that an statement issued earlier by the senior government officials had been critical of Majles performance.

Nateq-Nuri, in an interview with the Persian daily 'IRAN', on a question asking for his view on the letter signed by some Majles deputies, said that he had not signed the letter and did not intend to make comments in this regard.

Iran: Badamchian Criticizes Cabinet Ministers' Communique

LD2401200996 Tehran IRNA in English 1945 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 24, IRNA — Chairman of Article-10 Commission of Political Parties Asadollah Badamchian said in a telephone interview with IRNA here Wednesday that a communique issued earlier this week by a group of cabinet ministers and administrators was in part an intervention of the executive in the legislative branch of the Islamic government. He said in his judgement the topics brought up in the communique were not conducive to healthy administration of the Majles elections.

The official also said despite suggested interpretations it was unlikely that subscribers to the communique in fact intended to voice their support for President Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi- Rafsanjani. He said the subscribers to the communique had professed their knowledge of technical matters while in fact the communique itself had been a very untechnical document.

Badamchian said if the communique was intended with the idea of implying the wish of the subscribers for forming a new political party they could have addressed their application to Article-10 Commission of Political Parties.

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'Election Fever' Seen Increasing in Iranian Provinces

NC2501222496 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 16 Jan 96 p 2

[From the "For Your Information" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Election fever seems to have become even more frenzied in Qom. Despite the fact that in this round of elections, political, factional, and group rivalries are quite lackluster in Qom, competition for individual seats in the Islamic Majles is hotter than in the earlier rounds.

According to reports, so far 10 people have volunteered to participate in the Fifth Islamic Majles elections from Qom, of whom four are clerics and one is a doctor; there are two women and one lawyer from the Ministry of Justice, and three salaried employees and cultural figures. [passage omitted]

—One of the nominees from one of the cities in Kerman Province claims that he is close to the family of the great leader of the revolution [Khamene'i] and that his eminence asked him to be a candidate. Many Hezbollahis contacted JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI from the districts and have said they were upset that such abuse is taking place. Such tricks are usually resorted to in all elections by unscrupulous persons, and if the people report these impostors to the legal authorities, they will be prosecuted.

—So far, 15 people from the Bojnurd constituency in Khorasan Province have expressed willingness to be nominated as candidates in the Fifth Majles elections. The names of three women can be found among the candidates from this constituency. Some of the candidates introduce themselves by participating in various social gatherings such as memorial services, weddings, and visits to families, traders, and prominent figures in the cities and villages.

Campaigning Activity in Iranian Provinces Discussed

NC2401203996 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 10 Jan 96 p 2

[From the "For Your Information" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reliable sources, a former minister in the martyr Raja'i's cabinet intends to contest elections for the Fifth Islamic Majles from the Hamadan constituency. He is considered the most prominent of all the candidates nominated from this constituency. Twenty people have volunteered as possible candidates for the fifth round of Majles elections from Hamadan, which has two seats in the Majles. Nearly half these candidates have been campaigning against one another overtly and covertly. Most people are familiar with these candidates and their objectives. —One candidate from Qazvin is opposed to Western-style campaigning during elections. He said: We profess to be an Islamic society but, unfortunately, some decadent Western tactics are evident in our campaigning. He added: This will not only affect the course of the elections but will also permeate the general atmosphere of society. He criticized the campaigning of some of the nominees, which started even before campaigning officially began, saying: Unfortunately there are some blind spots.

—According to reports from Mahabad, nine people from this constituency have announced their willingness to contest the elections. Some have a record of cooperating with the now-defunct Democrat party. The district of Mahabad has one seat in the Majles and a population of 170,000.

—The Islamic Students Association Union (Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat) issued its first statement on elections last night. The Union criticized privatization and the economic adjustment policy and described the Guardians' Council's supervision of the approval of candidates in the elections as contravening the Constitution. The statement called for nullifying such supervision and added: "The stance of the Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat will be announced in a subsequent statement."

Iran: Nuri Urges Diversity of Candidates in Majles Election

LD2401184596 Tehran IRNA in English 1825 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 24, IRNA — Former Minister of the Interior Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdollah Nuri told IRNA here today that all officials and interested people must be allowed to express their feelings about the forthcoming Majles elections. He said also that the populace would obviously choose the best candidates if they were allowed to make their decision.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Nuri said that the diversity of candidates for the legislative assembly of Iran would have to be welcomed as a means for ensuring room for candidates with different outlooks.

He said to fear the presence of different minds in our midst is a symptom of the insecurity one may feel as the result of his societal station. He said such people put a premium on their own selfish interests in preference to freedoms.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Nuri said it would be to the best interest of the Islamic system to adopt practices and policies that approve rather than disapprove candidates with a

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liberal outlook so that voters would feel their individual responsibility in their voting as a measure for self-determination.

Iran: Reader Questions Elections

NC2401201296 Tehran SALAM in Persian 16 Jan 96 p 2

["Special Answer to a Telephone Call" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Unidentified caller] I have been reading SALAM for years and I am very well acquainted with the faces behind this newspaper—respected personalities such as Haj Aqa Kho'iniha, Haj Aqa Mohtashami, Haj Aqa Karrubi, and other important personalities whose names I cannot list. Everyone knows about their struggles and that most of them were trained by his eminence the imam. But why have they chosen to remain silent? What do they fear? Most probably they do not fear for their lives, because they have often shown that they are ready to sacrifice their lives for Islam. If they are silent for the sake of the continuation of Islam, they are harming Islam more.

[SALAM] This dear reader remembers the elections for the fourth term and saw the gentlemen [in the rival faction] mud-slinging to win the elections, forgetting that if they insulted some respected clergymen they would be harming other clergymen. Once they weakened society's faith, it would be difficult to tell the people to feel bad about one group and not another.

Today we see what they are writing on their scraps of paper. And it is not clear whether staying in power a few more days is worth so many lies, as they try in vain to discredit a few people. It is odd what these people do! And if some people leave the scene to keep society's atmosphere healthy or, better said, to inflict lesser blows and leave the other side to do whatever it pleases, to occupy any position it wishes, not to worry about the competition, and not to have nightmares, in a bid to prevent the other side from inflicting blows on the people's beliefs with its unwise efforts, you see the commotion and people asking why you have withdrawn and why you are silent, and so on. But when they do participate the other side starts its attacks against them just because they think independently and are not yes-men.

Participating in the elections and encouraging others to participate is not limited to a specific group. But not handing in a list of candidates and leaving the scene empty for rivals who do not heed any of the rules that govern such rivalry is less harmful than a presence that makes the rival do things that harm and weaken the ideologies and beliefs of the people. Those who can seriously enter the scene of elections and submit the names of competent people are not happy with the situation they are facing. Despite this dissatisfaction, they have no alternative, but to be patient and silent.

Jannati: Iranian Candidates Must Be Committed To Absolute Velayat

LD2401222996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Practical commitment to the Absolute Guardianship of the Jurisconsult [velayat-e motlaqe-ye faqih] is one of the main conditions for the competence of those who seek to become candidates for the Islamic Consultative Majles.

Ayatollah Jannati, secretary general of the Guardians Council, announced this in an interview with our correspondent. He said: The competence of candidates for the [Majles] elections will first be investigated by the supervisory committee of any province and then by the Central Supervisory Committee. Finally the Guardians Council will review the possible objections raised against the votes cast.

Referring to the method of selection of Guardians Council supervisors as well as the formation of provincial election supervisory committees, Mr. Jannati explained the concept of advisory supervision of the Guardians Council. He said: The supervision means prevention of probable violations by the supervisory and executive committees. Ayatollah Jannati added: If the executive committee cancels a constituency or rejects the competence of an individual the Guardians Council has the right to review those cases and offer its opinion. That is what is meant by advisory supervision.

The secretary general of the Guardians Council referred to the open political climate which exists in the community and considered the widespread participation of candidates for the fifth Majles elections to result from the existence of a satisfactory political atmosphere in the country.

Need for 'Responsible Voting' in Iranian Elections Noted

NC2501155296 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 17 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Responsible Voting Crucial for Nation-Building"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With the Majles elections approaching, the parliamentary campaigns are gaining an increasing momentum day by day.

There are two constituents in every election: the people and the candidates. People have established rights, and,

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in order to preserve and safeguard those rights, they send their representatives to the Parliament. It goes without saying that direct supervision of the government's performance by the entire nation is not feasible. Our nation has highly valued aspirations rooted in the ideals and objectives of the Islamic Revolution for which thousands of citizens sacrificed their lives.

Majles holds an exalted status in Iran's political system, a fad which requires all citizens to consider the candidates quite carefully before casting their votes. Assessing the records of the candidates who are presently members of the Parliament could prove helpful in this regard.

Evaluating such records is not so difficult. Iranian nation's goals, ideals and aspirations, embodied in the slogans chanted by the people during their anti-Shah demonstrations, have been clearly defined by the Constitution. The most prominent motto of the Revolution's era—which claimed the lives of thousands of Iranians in order to be realized--was: Independence, Freedom, Islamic Republic.

The above slogan can work as a touchstone to evaluate the past performance of the MPs running for the next elections as well as the new candidates.

If the attitudes and functions of the MPs standing for the upcoming Majles have been aimed at safeguarding and consolidating the above motto, people may cast their votes for them once again. Otherwise, they will not be fit for such a demanding task. Likewise, the eligibility of the newcomers can be verified by checking to what extent their past records have been congruent with the objectives manifested by the slogan.

In order to determine and shape their future, the committed Iranians should actively participate in the elections. It is incumbent upon every Iranian citizen to cast a responsible vote in the ballot box, and upon every candidate to ascertain that he or she possesses the qualifications, among which the commitment to the above motto is the most vital, before running for the parliamentary seats.

Absence of Parties Said To Endanger Iranian Political System

NC2601125696 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 23 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Defection in JRM Stems From Absence of Political Parties"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A couple of weeks ago we wrote in this column that political parties are indispensable for maintaining a healthy political system. We also said that it is not feasible to set up political parties in the short time left before the Fifth Majles elections. Hence, we proposed that candidates run for the Majles on the basis of their platforms, not on the basis of their alliances to one or the other high-ranking official in the system.

The first political party which was formed by the followers of the late Imam Khomeyni was the Islamic Republican Party. This party, however, had to stop functioning because it did not have the main characteristics of a true political party. No doubt it functioned as a loose but strong front against the enemies who were determined to overthrow the nascent Islamic system. But when the enemies were defeated, cracks began to emerge in the ranks of the members of the party to the extent that it was compelled to stop functioning.

When two major groups emerged from the dissolved Islamic Republican Party, it was clear to everyone that the new groups were formed on the basis of their approach to foreign policy and development models.

Today again we observe that the Jame'eh-ye Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez [Militant Clergy Association] (JRM) is breaking ranks. This time it is not due to differences on major policy issues, but on the nomination of the candidates for the Fifth Majles.

The split in the ranks of the JRM again shows that, if we are serious in having a democratic representative system, forming political parties is inevitable.

In fact, the JRM defectors are as responsible for the current policies as are the JRM Majles members. The differences between the two groups are not on any policy line, but rather on the nomination of candidates for the forthcoming Majles.

There is nothing wrong in trying to enter the Majles. Moreover, intensification of electioneering campaigns is always welcomed because it leads to more choices for the people. If the defectors introduce a new list of candidates, it will give more incentive to people to participate in the elections enthusiastically. However, the major political groups should not cease their political activities at the end of the Majles elections. They should seriously try to form political parties in the future to pave the way for public participation in the country's political affairs.

If the major Islamic groupings do not form political parties, there will be further defections. In the absence of political parties, such groupings will mushroom, endangering the whole political system.

It is understood that the major existing groups cannot form parties before the next Majles elections. Prudence demands that they form parties as soon as possible in

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order to consolidate their groups, increasing the groups' accountability to the nation. Political parties are the surest way to democracy.

Commander Says One Million Recruited Into Iranian Basij Force

LD2501151296 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1315 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] One million individuals from different social backgrounds were absorbed into the Basij force this year.

This statement was made by Brig-Gen 'Ali Reza Afshar at a ceremony held in Arak, to introduce the new Central Province commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps. Brig-Gen Afshar added: The Basijis are organized within the framework of 741 Ashura battalions; 134 al-Zahra battalions; local reserve battalions and basiji reconnaissance and advance guards.

He added: Currently 2.2 million college students have been organized into Basiji reconnaissance and advance guards.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Unresolved F-16 Issue Called 'Enduring' Security Concern

BK2601104596 Islamabad THE NATION in English 26 Jan 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Elusive F-16's"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Defence Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani, who faced a barrage of hostile questions by the Opposition, has categorically declared in the National Assembly that Pakistan will look into all options including going to the courts if $658 million paid for the F-16s is not refunded. He was, however, hopeful that the matter will be resolved in the Pak-US Consultative Group meeting scheduled to be held in March.

Following the passage of the Brown Amendment which ironically was projected as a major breakthrough in Pak-US relations, the people were given to understand that the backlog of irritants is about to be cleared and the unfair deal given to Pakistan over the F-16s issue will be duly rectified. Nevertheless, nothing seems to have moved beyond rhetoric since the officially proclaimed new era of understanding with the US, particularly in relation to Pakistan's core grievance.

The scenario is virtually back to square one, since Pakistan has neither been able to secure the F-16s nor the money paid for the deal has been returned. The Americans are said to be still looking for a third party to buy the F-16s presently lying in stores in the US to raise the money for reimbursement to Pakistan. But, as was quite obvious from the Defence Minister's blank response, the government is not aware of any progress in the US bid to find new buyers.

The only explanation Mirani could offer for what the members of the House thought was inordinate delay in settling the F-16s issue, was that in the Pak-US Consultative Group meeting held on May 31 last year, it was decided to resolve all foreign military sales issues, including the disposal of the F-16s, in a separate Programme Management Review. And what has transpired since then is anybody's guess, as the honourable Minister had nothing worth while to report to the House, and suggested that the members better wait till the forthcoming meeting of the Pak-US Consultative Group in March to hear the "good news", provided there was any.

Mirani also talked about exploring all options, including going to the courts, if the matter was not resolved in bilateral negotiations, assuring the House that the government is well aware of the country's needs and trying its best to settle the F-16s issue. Whether it has been "misplaced euphoria", or "playing to the gallery" for scoring points, the "one-time waiver", that the Brown Amendment is all about, has been grossly overrated as a diplomatic triumph, raising false hopes of the renewal of US patronage. Apart from a popular backlash that may hurt the government's credibility and give rise to serious misgivings abut the official pronouncements of "successes and accomplishments", the unresolved issue of the F-16s is a matter of enduring concern in the context of national security.

The government owes a more comprehensive explanation than the Defence Minister's statement in the National Assembly to account for its painfully sluggish response in pressing the Americans for an early settlement. Why has it taken so long to talk of "exploring all options" when the recourse to go to the courts was available, and the Americans have been far from enthusiastic about lending a helping hand to meet Pakistan's defence requirements? It is high time the government stopped fooling itself and the people about striking a new equation of friendship with the Americans and instead seriously took up the task of securing diverse and reliable sources of assistance and cooperation to fulfil the country's basic defence needs.

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Pakistan: Transit Trade Pact With Central Asia, China Ratified

BK2501144396 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 25 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and China are ready for transit trade through the Karakoram Highway. This was disclosed by the foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, in an interview with exclusive news service:

[Begin Ali recording] There is a piece of good news which I like to share with my countrymen; that is, that Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the People's Republic of China, and Pakistan have finally ratified the transit trade treaty which was signed some time back. Well, this treaty is ready and it will open the way for trade between Central Asian republics and Pakistan. This will be through the Karakoram Highway, which will be in turned into an all-weather road for which the Government of Pakistan has already allocated 50 crore rupees along with the government's annual maintenance of about 7 crore rupees. All the custom arrangements at checkposts are being finalized, for which the officials will be meeting, and as soon as these are done, Pakistan can undertake normal and — we hope — substantial trade with our Central Asian neighbors and with China. [end recording]

Nawaz: Government Plans To Turn Lahore Into Karachi

BK2601095796 Islamabad THE NATION in English 26 Jan 96 p 1,13

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — Opposition Leader Nawaz Sharif has said that the government has planned to create Karachi like situation in Lahore and urged Lahorites to unite on one platform rising above their political consideration to save their city.

In a statement issued here on Thursday he said the Punjab Governor Raja Saroop Khan has been given the charge of this plan. He said for this purpose a government official who is known for his fanning terrorism in Karachi has been posted in Punjab with special powers. Nawaz said recent wave of killings and incidents of bomb blasts are the part of this plan. He said Benazir has lost her senses after knowing that she has lost popularity and credibility among masses especially in Sindh. He said masses will not tolerate her fascist acts and she will be held accountable for her deeds very soon. He said Benazir has deprived the Chief Minister of his constitutional powers and practically there is governor rule in Punjab.

Nawaz Sharif paid tribute to the activists of the Muslim League Youth Wing and other workers of the League who are protesting against the government atrocities and fighting for the supremacy of law, people's right, independent judiciary and to end terrorism, lawlessness and lootmar [looting] of the national exchequer. He condemned the arrest of his party workers and their family members including women. He said in Sindh hundreds of their workers have been arrested and their families are being harassed. He also condemned state terrorism and use of government machinery to crush the Opposition.

Nawaz said the Muslim League workers are facing the high- handedness and the atrocities perpetrated by the coward rulers with a spirit of Pakistan Movement and he hoped that finally they would be the victorious.

Pakistan: Punjab Minister Says Nawaz-Altaf Ties Boosting 'Terrorism'

BK2601111596 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 26 Jan 96 p 12

[Report by Aurang Zeb]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore, Jan 25 — Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Muhammad Arif Nakai has reiterated that as a result of Altaf-Nawaz agreement in London, terrorist activities in the province have suddenly increased. He said Mian Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister had declared Altaf Hussain, a terrorist and decided to launch army operation to crush the MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement].

He was talking to a group of journalists at an iftar [Ramadan fast-breaking] party at his office on Thursday evening.

Responding to a question, the Chief Minister reiterated his earlier statement, issued during his tour of Japan and said that after the return of Mian Shahbaz Sharif terrorist activities in the province had increased.

He accused Shahbaz Sharif of being involved in these incidents. "I issued the statement after due consideration and evidence before the press would be placed soon."

Sardar Arif Nakai strongly dispelled the impression, given by some newspapers, that there were differences between him, the Governor Punjab or other partners of PDF [Pakistan Democratic Front]. The Governor Punjab is his old friend and they are working with mutual consultation, he claimed.

In this connection, he referred to his recent meeting with the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] office-bearers and said this meeting was held on the instruction of the Prime Minister to discuss some of their demands.

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He concluded if there was any unpleasant situation of relation between the coalition partners, then the Prime Minister would have not assigned him his task.

He said in this connection a meeting between the Senior Minister Punjab and Dr Basharat Ellahi also had taken place to sort out differences of workers of two parties. In this connection a subcommittee had been formed to resolve the differences.

Responding to a question regarding law and order situation, the Chief Minister said, "we have decided to give the Inspector General Police [IGP] Punjab, free hand."

The Chief Minister remarked that the IGP made a complaint of political interference in the matter of maintenance of law and order and postings and transfers. The IGP has asked free hand and one month time to improve the law and order situation.

The Chief Minister disclosed that the suggestion of the IGP had been accepted and he had been given three months, instead of one month for the improvement of law and order situation. However, the Chief Minister said that he had ordered that the incharge of a police station would be suspended if two dacoities would take place in his area, and a DSP [Deputy Superintendent of Police] in whose area of command four dacoities would be committed would be suspended and similar a superintendent of police in whose area of control seven dacoities would be committed, he would be suspended.

Responding to a question of murder of Sultan Rabi and Sajid Gilani the Chief Minister said the causes of these murders were not sectarian ones. However the firing in Shorkot was a sectarian incident and police had also arrested the culprits.

Answering another question the Chief Minister said the government did not have any plan for a general crackdown on the activities of religious groups. He said the government wanted to provide them a chance to improve their behaviour before any sort of extreme measures.

Sardar Arif Nakai said it has been observed that mostly accused involved in serious crimes after their arrest are released on bails. In view of this practice, he has decided that culprits involved in serious crimes and dacoities would be tried by the anti-terrorists court.

The Chief Minister said expansion of provincial cabinet would be considered after I'd al-Fitr. He said there were two or three PML(J) [Pakistan Muslim League-Junejo], MPAs [Members of Provincial Assembly] who were voicing against him but mostly MPAs were satisfied. He said all PDF MPA's had been given additional department funds of Rs [rupees] 20 lakh each.

The Chief Minister favoured the police encounters and said such criminals who were responsible for heinous crimes did not deserve any sympathy. He said he would personally make surprise check of police stations and security measures taken against the crimes.

Pakistani High Court To Hear Court Martial Challenge

BK2601092096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 26 Jan 96 p 1,13

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — A Full Bench of the Supreme Court comprising Mr Justice Saiduzzaman Siddiqi, Mr Justice Mukhtar Ahmad Junejo and Mr Justice Muhammad Bashir Jahangiri will hear January 28 at Islamabad a petition, challenging a trial by the Field General Court Martial (FGCM), Attock, of the four Pakistan army officers, accused of plotting coup against the government in September last.

It is a Human Rights Petition under Article 184(3) read with Article 187 of the Constitution which has been filed by Muhammad Nawaz, father of Col. Muhammad Azad Minhas, one of the accused officers mainly praying to the court to order an open court trial of the accused persons by a General Court Martial which may not be under the command of 10 Corps headed by Lt. Gen. Ali Quli Khan. The petitioner prays for staying proceedings of the trial in question pending decision in this petition.

The petition instituted through advocate Maqbul Elahi Malik, further seeks provision of the original manuscript of the Summary of Evidence, which is hand-written, to enable the petitioner to prove that it was tampered with. The petitioner has further requested the ex Court to direct production of the fifth accused, namely Saif Ullah Akhtar in the court along with other co-accused. The newly constituted General Court Martial should be headed by an officer higher in rank and senior to the held officers and that a direction may also be issued for initiation proceeding under Section 51 of the Pakistan Army Act, for not producing Saif Ullah Akhtar, before the FGCM on the last dates of hearing.

As per the brief background of the matter mentioned in the petition, on September 8 last the Customs Authorities captured some arms and ammunition, allegedly from a Datsun car belonging to Col. Liaqat Ali Raja (Approver). Consequently, a number of army officers and the civilians were arrested of which the army authorities ultimately decided to try only five person namely Maj-Gen Zaheer-ul-Islam Abbasi, Brig Mustansar Billah, Col. Muhammad Azad Minhas, Col. Anayat Ullah

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Khan and a civilian Qari Saif Ullah Akhtar in the said Court, specifically convened for this purpose.

Laying down points for consideration of the Supreme Court, the petition stated that a Brigadier rank officer has convened Court Martial to try the officers falling in the rank of Major General, Brigadier and Colonel in the Army when the propriety demands that the convening authority which also has the power under Army Act to confirm or not confirm the Court Martial, should be higher in rank. In view of the express provisions of law and circumstances, the accused should be tried by the General Court Martial whose convening authority is either the Federal Government or Chief of Army Staff.

The petition further submitted that by the appointment of Lt-Gen Ali Quli Khan as Corps Commander of 10 Corps, in whose corps the accused at present are subordinate officers against whom the investigation was ordered by him in his capacity as Director General, Military Intelligence [MI]. He had, not only, ordered investigation but had also personally arrested one of the accused namely Maj-Gen Zaheer-ul-Islam Abbasi besides appointing Brig Tariq Mehmood of MI Directorate to record Summary of Evidence. According to the petition, a situation has emerged where the convening order needs to be declared as without lawful authority. The petition also raised the point whether the presiding officer of the FGCM, namely Maj-Gen Zahid Ehsan, who is junior to one of the accused, is an interested person in as much as the dismissal of the accused Major General would elevate him to seniority in rank to other major generals. The petition added that the non-trial of the fifth accused person Saif Ullah Akhtar has prejudiced the case as well.

The civilians Muhammad Saeed Khan, Nadim Shafi, Masood Ahmad, Muhammad Zahid Akram and army officers Lt-Col. Zahid Hussain, Col. Muhammad Iqbal, Maj Muhammad Waheed were arrested as accused investigated, and thereafter, they have been shown as witnesses, adds the petition, continuing, that no one can be an accused and a witness at the same time.

The petitioner has assailed the FGCM asserting that it was convened without meeting the requisite conditions in this regard and that holding of in camera proceedings of the trial in question is contrary to the provisions of the Pakistan Army Act—it is also against the rules of natural justice and basic principles of jurisprudence.

The petition contends that the Summary of Evidence has been tampered with as much as that the manuscript of the evidence actually recorded by hand is different from the typed version, given to the accused. The accused, while appearing before the FGCM on January 14 last, raised an objection, which was permissible under the Pakistan Army Act, to the presidency of the Court by an officer junior to the rank of one of the accused persons.

An objection was also raised before the Trial Court to the framing of the charge pertaining to the alleged conspiracy on the ground that the alleged as well as the conspiracy to eliminate certain generals was not tantamount to over-throwing the government or waging war against the State. These objections, the petition said were over ruled.

The contentions of the petitioner have been laid down on the ground that to have the protection of law and to be treated in accordance with law is inalienable right of every citizen which has been violated in the instant case by ignoring all provisions of law applicable to the accused persons. Demolishing the Constitutional right of upholding dignity of man, the accused persons have been tortured for the purpose of extracting evidence who were also denied to avail themselves of the legal rights immediately after the arrest and that on merits the entire evidence falls within the mischief of heresy.

Col Raja Liaqat Ali from whose car the consignment was allegedly collected, the petition stated, remained in custody for 38 days, whereafter on October 25 last he agreed to become an approver and notwithstanding that he has given the confessional statement, he is still under detention. The Army Law carries no provision to make an accused person an approver, asserts the petition. The petition maintains: That "a highly improbable story has been concocted to implicate five persons whose only fault is that they are practising Muslims and their arrest has been effected to discourage the army personnel from becoming practising Muslims." That the typed summary of the Evidence provided to the accused persons and the Court has been tampered with to suit the prosecution, which is immoral and in gross violation of the army Regulations [AR] (I) 291. "That the entire process of investigation starting from abduction, torture at the Special Investigation Branch and to the recording of summary of evidence was done by the Intelligence agencies in violation of rules, says the petition adding that the accused officers have been attached from one unit/formation to another through fake letters and they never reported to the headquarters, being in the Special Investigation Branch and Attock Fort Jail. The original commanding officer was never informed about the shifting/attachment of their officers of such senior ranks. That the members of the court have been drawn from station outside the jurisdiction of Headquarters logistic Area, Rawalpindi.

The petition contends that in violation of the Army Act, a fake chain of command for this particular FGCM has been created with mala fide intentions and that the

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charge sheet had been signed by Brig Abdul Qayyum in violation of ARI (160), Pakistan Army Act (rule 17) and Rule 159, while the charge sheet must be signed by the officer in actual command of the unit to which the accused belong.

Continuing, the petition says while on the one hand a dis- information and character-assassination of the accused petitioner has been done through international Press and international forum of writers and intellectuals by the prime minister of Pakistan but on the other, an opportunity to defend through the open court as provided in Pakistan Army Act Rule 147 is being illegally denied as the FGCM is being held in camera, which is a clear violation of Human Rights and the Constitution of Pakistan.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Military Spokesman Views Search for Missing Helicopter

BK2501103696 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 25 Jan 96

[Report by Panduka Senanayake — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Sri Lanka Air Force [SLAF] and the Navy were continuing their search operations for the SLAF MI-17 helicopter which went missing while on a flight from the main northern military base in Palali to Vettilaikerny off Elephant Pass, military spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe told the media yesterday.

He said that there has been no trace so far of the helicopter which went missing with 39 passengers and crew on Monday afternoon. The Brigadier declined to speculate about the causes for the helicopter to go missing but in answer to a question, said that the security forces believed the chopper may have 'gone' into the sea.

He also denied that the helicopter was overloaded and said that it could carry 40 passengers in addition to the crew.

He also mentioned three incidents of significance that had occured in the east. They were the killing of two civilians and the adoption of new tactics in the use of explosives by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

According to him, one of the civilians, a member of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), was abducted and killed by the Tigers at Mandhur in Batticaloa on Monday evening while the other, a villager of Jayanthiyaya, 12 km north east of Welikanda in Polonnaruwa was shot dead on Tuesday morning. A second civilian had managed to escape with injuries in the Jayanthiyaya incident, the Brigadier said.

He also mentioned the detection, by the army, of explosives fitted to a bullock cart at Omanthurai, near Chenkaladi in Batticaloa. It was the first such instance that the LTTE used a bullock cart as a bomb. Earlier, they had used other modes of transportation including cars, vans, lorries, pedal and motorcycles and more recently a handcart.

Sri Lankan Minister Views Consultations on Solving Ethnic Problem

BK2501103596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 25 Jan 96

[Report by T. Sabaratnam — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has already initiated the process of consulting the opposition parties, particularly the main opposition United National Party [UNP], to achieve national consensus on a political solution to the ethnic problem.

"On a directive from the President, I have already spoken to UNP leader Ranil Wikremasinghe and we hope to meet in a few days", Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister G.L. Peiris said yesterday.

Prof. Peiris told the weekly press briefing at the Tourist Board yesterday that he would discuss with Mr. Wickremesinghe the specific concerns of the UNP and try to work out amicable solutions.

He said the discussions he would have with the UNP would be candid and conducted in a spirit of mutual goodwill and cooperation.

"The President has instructed me to make the government's approach very clear. It is not the approach of claiming credit for solving the problem. It is the approach of treating the ethnic problem a national issue which need to be resolved for the good of the country", Prof. Peiris said.

He categorically said the credit for finding a solution to the ethnic problem would go to all who contribute in achieving that laudable goal.

"We are appealing to all political parties to treat the ethnic issue an urgent national problem and cooperate with us to find a solution", Prof. Peiris said.

He added: "It is our earnest hope that all parties will deal with the problem in a non-partisan way."

Prof. Peiris said the UNP has not reacted to the legal draft of government's devolution proposals so far and

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said the Parliamentary Select Committee, apart from mutual discussions, are the fora to iron out differences and work out a national consensus.

The Constitutional Affairs Minister, the man behind the devolution proposals, said the government had addressed its mind to the crucial issue of unit of devolution. But it would be discussed at the Parliamentary Select Committee after sufficient progress has been achieved in determining the powers to be devolved to the units.

"The government is following a certain sequence. The basic line of demarcation of the powers, the central government and regional administrations would wield, will be worked out first. As we progress in this exercise we will consider the unit of devolution", Prof. Peiris said.

He also dealt with the criticism already voiced by political parties and the press. The statement issued by four Tamil parties — TELO [Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization], PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam], EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front] and EROS [Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students] contains two inaccuracies, he said. The legal draft does not give a blanket power to the president to dissolve the regional councils. It was a power given to deal with an extreme situation. Then, the list of powers devolved to the regions were the same listed in the August 3 proposals. To say it had been changed is an error.

Prof. Peiris said the issues of national flag and the foremost place given to Buddhism raised by the four Tamil parties was an attempt to arouse emotion. "We have lived with those. They are in the 1978 constitution. They do not create difficulties to the minorities".

Question: When the UNP summoned the All Party Conference, the SLFP [Sri Lanka Freedom Party] did not cooperate. Would UNP cooperate with the government now?

Prof. Peiris: We should start a new chapter. If we delve into the past nothing good would result. Let's begin a new chapter.

Sri Lanka: Five 'Militants' Among 10 Killed in Clashes

BK2601121496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At least five terrorists were killed in a security force's ambush at Kondavil, north of Jaffna, last night. Four soldiers were wounded in this confrontation. The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadres fled the area carrying some of their casualties. The security forces recovered the bodies of five terrorists as well as an automatic weapon and communication equipment.

The Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry also reports that a group of STF [Special Task Force] personnel were ambushed by terrorists in Bakkiella area of the Amparai District yesterday. The STP retaliated causing several casualties among the attackers. The body of one terrorist was recovered. Two STF personnel were killed in the confrontation, while two others sustained injuries. Two civilians, including the [words indistinct] of the (Thadirthalava), were killed in the crossfire. Meanwhile, the navy destroyed five LTTE boats at Porasanthavu, north of Pooneryn, yesterday. The Defense Ministry reports that the Navy suffered no casualty.

The first batch of doctors who volunteered to work in the Jaffna Hospital in response to a plea by President Kumaratunga was flown to Jaffna yesterday. Health Minister A.H.M. Fowzie said that they comprised four doctors, four nurses, four attendants and three minor employees. They will work in the Jaffna Hospital for a week and then return, after which another batch of 10 will leave for Jaffna Hospital to replace them.

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